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THESIS

GERMANY'S *ANSCHLUSS* WITH AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA'S ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA: AN ANALYTICAL COMPARISON

by

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June 2016

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13. ABSTRACT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASSR	Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
KGB	*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKVD	*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party
RSFR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SA	*Sturmabteilung*
SS	*Schutzstaffel*
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
UNR	Ukrainian People's Republic
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   OVERVIEW

This thesis compares irredentism and revanchism in the cases of Nazi Germany and contemporary Russia with regard to violent and coercive changes of borders and the celebration of war and soldiers as an element of statecraft. It conducts a critical analysis of the comparisons often made between Nazi Germany's *Anschluss* with Austria in 1938 and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The analysis has relevant implications for U.S. national security policy through the evaluation of revanchist tendencies in an area with U.S. national security interests.

B.   SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, a body of scholarly work grew comparing the politics and social dynamics of the newly democratic Russian Federation to those of Weimar Germany after World War I. While Russia's intervention in the 2008 crisis in Georgia raised eyebrows and provoked international criticism, Russia did not annex any Georgian territory, but erected puppet states with stalemated territorial conflicts that, nonetheless, compromised Georgian sovereignty. In other words, Russia occupied two Georgian provinces and recognized them as independent states. In the next phase of revisionism, the Russian Federation's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 sparked a slew of comparisons between Adolf Hitler and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. The comparisons were made not only by opinion makers and other journalists, but also by high-ranking politicians and public figures. The evolution of the comparisons, with the phrase "Weimar Russia" and portrayals of a Hitlerian Putin, gained traction in the West beyond scholarly circles as the Crimean annexation was compared by many in Europe and America to Germany's *Anschluss* with Austria in the years 1921–1938.

Although no historical analogy is perfect, this particular one deserves investigation due to its implications for the European order and its value for understanding contemporary conflict, especially the overused concept of "hybrid war." The comparison shifted from one regarding a government with weak democratic

traditions and antagonistic political movements and a desire to be regarded as a great power to that of an authoritarian leader with a revanchist political program. The comparisons between Hitler's Pan-German aspirations and Putin's pan-Russian ones have grabbed attention because they could imply that the Russian case might escalate into further territorial and political expansion and eventually a large-scale war.

On the other hand, Hitler comparisons are easy to make and carry with them a powerful polemical impact with both general and academic audiences. The Crimean annexation and the Austrian *Anschluss* are not the only territorial acquisitions based on irredentist claims, just as Vladimir Putin is not the first leader since Hitler to exhibit authoritarian tendencies coupled with the use of force and integral nationalism. The comparison of these accessions of neighboring land is nevertheless significant and warrants critical analysis. The objective of this thesis is to evaluate rigorously a contemporary interpretation of a potential threat to the Euro-Atlantic security order from a revanchist power by comparing these two case studies.

C.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of literature that addresses the proposed thesis topic directly is limited in academic sources. While comparisons involving Nazi Germany and contemporary Russia are made frequently in both the media and scholarly articles, the analogies are brief and typically address only the broader characteristics of the leaders and their territorial acquisitions. The fall of the Soviet Union sparked analysis and debate over the similarities and differences between the Weimar Republic in the inter-war years (1919–1933) and the post-Soviet, ostensibly democratic Russian Federation. The chronological continuation of this comparison leads to one between Hitler and Putin. Such comparisons have become increasingly prevalent in commentaries concerning recent Russian foreign policy.

The literature comparing Weimar Germany and post-Soviet Russia is extensive. While a number of scholars agree concerning certain similarities between these two troubled post-imperial democracies, there is disagreement over the particulars and validity of the analogy. Most of the literature from the 1990s following the collapse of the

Soviet Union concentrated on striking similarities between the two post-imperial democracies (the Weimar Republic and the Russian Federation) and the potential in the latter for a transition into authoritarian rule, which was the end result of the Weimar Republic. Extensive research into the political landscape of the post-Communist Russian Federation has evaluated the threat of a revanchist regime with certain characteristics similar to fascism taking power.

Hitler and Mussolini comparisons abound in the literature as well as in the rhetoric referring to the German and Italian fascist icons that emerged after the fall of the Soviet regime.[1] Although many contemporaries viewed the comparison as strikingly apt, some held that the social and political characteristics of post-Soviet Russia would not allow a transition to fascism because of the suffering that Nazi aggression during the World War II brought to the population of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).[2]

The main difficulty with the Weimar Russia analogy is that there are only two cases from which to develop the correlation and hypotheses as to trends and causation.[3] More recent analyses of post-imperial democracies address party ideologies in fledgling democracies and expound on the lack of ideologies other than nationalism and an assertion of moral superiority in post-Soviet Russia. These analyses minimize the potential for a shift to fascism but acknowledge the authoritarian tendencies of Putin's regime.[4]

Weimar Russia comparisons expound on the myth of the internal enemy that was infamous in Weimar Germany. Revanchists in Russia have asserted that there was a betrayal from within by the democrats with the aid of Western forces.[5] The post-World

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[1] Alexandre Yanov, *Weimar Russia: And What We Can Do About It* (New York: Slovo-Word Publishing House, 1995), 83.

[2] Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1996): 371–72.

[3] Stephen E. Hanson and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, "The Weimar/Russia Comparison," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1997): 254, doi: 10.1080/1060586X.1997.10641439.

[4] Stephen E. Hanson, *Post-Imperial Democracies: Ideology and Party Formation in Third Republic France, Weimar Germany, and Post-Soviet Russia* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), 237.

[5] Yanov, *Weimar Russia*, 87.

War I analogy continues its likeness with the end of the Cold War in that a great power is not defeated on the battlefield, but is the victim of treaties that diminish its territory and limit its military forces during an hour of weakness.[6] Furthermore, the powerful anti-Western sentiment in rhetoric among nationalist groups in Russia and its spread into wider politics as pro-Western sentiments are branded as anti-patriotic have further parallels with the Weimar Right.[7]

Scholars wrote much of the literature regarding the "Weimar Russia" comparison prior to Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia, and there is not much mention of Russian revanchist tendencies or potential immediately following the fall of the USSR. The comparison to Germany's aspirations toward Czechoslovakia and Austria is particularly limited and not well developed.[8] Following the 2008 invasion of Georgia by Russian forces and the 2014 annexation of Crimea, the *Anschluss* analogies abounded. The *Moscow Times* ran an article calling the annexation "Putin's Crimean Anschluss" and directly comparing the West's response to appeasement in 1938 with its reaction in 2014, while Hillary Clinton, Wolfgang Schäuble, Prince Charles, and several other notable figures publicly compared Vladimir Putin to Adolf Hitler.[9] Analysis of metaphorical mentions relating Vladimir Putin to Adolf Hitler in Western media—particularly English-language mass media—reveals that the frequency of use of the analogy directly corresponds to aggressive Russian foreign policy actions.[10]

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[6] Leonid Luks, "'Weimar Russia?' Notes on a Controversial Concept," *Russian Politics and Law* 46, no. 4 (2008): 47, doi: 10.2753/RUP1061-1940460403; "Hanson and Kopstein, "Weimar/Russia Comparison," 259.

[7] Luks, "'Weimar Russia?'" 51.

[8] Timothy J. Colton and Robert Levold, *After the Soviet Union: From Empire to Nations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 100.

[9] Victor Davidoff, "Putin's Crimean Anschluss," *Moscow Times*, March 3, 2014, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/putin-s-crimean-anschluss/495462.html; Philip Rucker, "Hillary Clinton Says Putin's Actions Are Like 'What Hitler Did Back in the '30s,'" *Washington Post*, March 5, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/03/05/hillary-clinton-says-putins-action-are-like-what-hitler-did-back-in-the-30s/; Christian Reiermann, "Fighting Words: Schäuble Says Putin's Crimea Plans Reminiscent of Hitler," *Spiegel Online International*, March 31, 2014, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/schaeuble-compares-putin-moves-in-crimea-to-policies-of-hitler-a-961696.html; Bridget Kendall, "Vladimir Putin Condemns Prince Charles' 'Nazi' Remarks," *BBC*, May 24, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-27558825.

[10] Eugenia Kuznetsova, "Underlying Meanings of the Hitler Metaphor in Western Media," *Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism* 4, no. 10 (2014): 5, doi: 10.4172/2165-7912.1000230.

Granted, the time elapsed since the fall of the Third Reich and access to archives have led to a vast body of work regarding the Nazis, while Putin's regime is largely a mystery to outsiders and continues to be dynamic. In particular, the scarcity of official information regarding the invasion and annexation of Crimea makes a comprehensive and precise comparison to the Nazi *Anschluss* with Austria difficult. Nevertheless, the outward political implications and similarities and the narratives associated with each are relevant in analyzing the nature of the land grabs. The reinterpretations of the collapse of the Soviet Union and pan-Slavic Russian nationalist rhetoric among Russian politicians[11] are comparable to the ideas expressed by certain post-1918 Pan-German political movements.[12]

Furthermore, both cases involved international agreements that banned the reunification of territories and were disregarded. Both the Versailles and St. Germain Treaties stipulated that Germany would "respect strictly the independence of Austria."[13] Similarly, the Russian Federation agreed to "respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine" in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances.[14] The regional distributions of supporters of pan-national movements are similarly parallel as Pan-German sentiment in Austria was limited to Tyrol and other localities,[15] much like pro-Russian sentiment in Ukraine is geographically confined to Crimea and the Donbass.[16] The preceding political struggles in the capitals (Vienna and Kiev) summon comparable, although divergent, paths. While the Nazi placement of Arthur Seyss-Inquart into power was the result of constant political and para-military

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[11] Mikhail Suslov, "Geographical Metanarratives in Russia and the European East: Contemporary Pan-Slavism," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53, no. 5 (2012): 576, doi: 10.2747/1539-7216.53.5.575.

[12] Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938–1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 200), 6.

[13] Rolf Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War: From the Anschluss to the State Treaty* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 6.

[14] "Budapest Memorandums on Security Assurances, 1994," Council on Foreign Relations, December 5, 1994, http://www.cfr.org/nonproliferation-arms-control-and-disarmament/budapest-memorandums-security-assurances-1994/p32484.

[15] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 4.

[16] Orlando Figes, "Is There One Ukraine? The Problem with Ukrainian Nationalism," *Foreign Affairs Special Collection: Crisis in Ukraine* (December 2013).

pressure from the Nazis as a part of Operation Otto—the invasion of Austria[17]—Putin's "hybrid war" seizure of institutions in Crimea with unmarked Special Forces appeared to be a reaction to Moscow's waning influence in Ukraine following the Orange Revolution and Kiev's diplomacy in pursuit of an association agreement with the European Union.[18]

The most authoritative and informative historical studies of the *Anschluss* appear to be Evan Burr Bukey's *Hitler's Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938–1945* and Rolf Steininger's *Austria, Germany and the Cold War: From the Anschluss to the State Treaty, 1938–1955*, Brigitte Hamann's *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*[19] and Jurgen Gehl's *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss: 1931–1938*[20] give further insight.

With regard to the Russian annexation of Crimea, Roy Allison has contributed an extensive account in his article in *International Affairs*.[21] Among the primary sources, the March 2014 address by Russian President Putin on the annexation of Crimea stands out.[22]

The initial literature review regarding this thesis topic reveals that, while there is a small swath of literature that has made early comparisons of the two fragile post-imperial democracies, the comparison has not been extensively applied to the current Ukraine crisis and its further implications. Through a review of the abundant historical works on Nazi Pan-German actions leading to World War II and comparison with recent scholarly work regarding the Ukraine crisis and pan-national sentiment in Russia, this thesis evaluates the validity of the comparisons between Nazi Germany and contemporary

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[17] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War,* 7.

[18] Keith Darden, "Ukraine's Crisis of Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs*, (March 3, 2014), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-03-03/ukraines-crisis-legitimacy.

[19] Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*, trans. Thomas Thornton (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999).

[20] Jurgen Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss: 1931–1938* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963).

[21] Roy Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November 2014), doi: 10.1111/1468-2346.12170.

[22] Vladimir Putin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation," March 18, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

Russia, notably with regard to the German *Anschluss* with Austria and the Russian annexation of Crimea. This analytical comparison may throw light on broader issues, including nationalism, militarism, and foreign policy goals and the decision-making of the top leaders.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The first and most extreme possible explanation and hypothesis is that the fall of the Soviet Union begat a scenario—similar to that of Weimar Germany in the inter-war years—that was conducive to the rise of authoritarian rule. Regardless of the attempts to build democratic institutions and the opening of Russian markets and society, the rise of Vladimir Putin and his invasions of Georgia and Ukraine bear sufficient resemblances to Hitler's rise to power and land-grabs prior to World War II. This suggests that, in conjunction with other causative factors, additional Russian politico-military campaigns for territorial expansion are possible in the future. The nationalistic pan-Slavism rhetoric in modern Russian politics and Putin's security guarantees to Russian-speaking minorities suggest an aspiration to future conquests that may resemble Hitler's acquisition of Austria and the Czech Sudetenland prior to his invasion of Poland.

On the other hand, further research may show that, despite striking resemblances between Hitler's and Putin's undertakings in states in similar socio-political situations, the resemblances are merely indicative of pan-national dictators in general. The recent references and comparisons to Hitler in the media are effective in portraying authoritarian leaders as aggressive due to the near-universal recognition of the Nazi dictator. At present it appears that Putin's ambitions are not likely to escalate into large-scale conventional or nuclear war in pursuit of large territorial gains, but rather will remain confined to small areas with Russian-speaking populations that are unlikely to result in dangerous confrontations between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

This thesis proposes to investigate the related hypothesis that Putin's recent ambitions and actions in Russia's "near abroad" are the result of neo-pan-Slavism and nationalism and an attempt to regain some of the Soviet Union's former territories using pan-national rhetoric framed as Russian patriotism. The annexation of Crimea and the

Austrian *Anschluss* bear similarities—as do many land grabs—but do not necessarily indicate a Russian potential for global revisionism.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis, as discussed earlier, conducts case studies of pivotal territorial acquisitions by post-Soviet Russia and post-Imperial Germany in a focused comparison designed to substantiate or discredit the popular comparisons in the media and political discourse of the policies of these regimes.

In other words, in light of the actions of the Russian Federation in Crimea, the thesis investigates and compares the Pan-German movements leading up to the Nazi acquisitions of Austria before World War II to pan-Slavic and pan-Russian movements. The character of modern Russian movements is evaluated with regard to rising nationalism and the potential for further territorial acquisitions. In particular, the sharp rise in analogies in the media and political discourse between the Austrian *Anschluss* and the annexation of Crimea is investigated in order to assess to what extent the comparison is valid.

While the body of historical works on Nazi Germany is vast, this thesis concentrates on studies that evaluate the popular sentiment in Austria prior to and following the *Anschluss* and the political events leading to the *Anschluss*. The body of work regarding Russian pan-Slavism and recent turmoil is less extensive and more fragmented, but available in academic journals and periodicals.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter I outlines the research goals and introduce the topic. Chapter II offers a case study of Nazi Germany's *Anschluss* with Austria. Chapter III presents a case study of Russia's annexation of Crimea, including factors such as the resurgence of Russian nationalism. In Chapter IV, the annexation of Crimea is analytically compared to the Austrian *Anschluss*. Chapter V offers conclusions.

II.   ORIGINS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS OF THE *ANSCHLUSS*

The second sentence of Adolf Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, describes his birthplace, Braunau am Inn, astride the border of Bavaria and Upper Austria, as "situated just on the frontier of those two States the reunion of which seems…a task to which we should devote our lives." Hitler adds, "German–Austria must be restored to the great German Motherland."[23] A primary goal of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) was the *Anschluss*—or connection—of what after 1919 was known as German–Austria to Nazi Germany. That is, the Nazis sought the union of those lands that the Prussians had expelled from the German state in the 19th century and that now longed for unity as a goal of statecraft, not solely limited to the National Socialists. When this goal was achieved in March 1938, it constituted the most aggressive move of Nazi irredentism since Hitler's chancellorship began in 1933. Described somewhat simplistically as "the first victim of Hitler-ite aggression" in the Allies' 1943 Moscow Declaration, the Republic of Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany in a surprise coup de main in March 1938 that followed five years of more or less cold or hybrid war oriented to accomplishing this end.[24] The crowds of cheering Austrians that greeted the invading German troops in Salzburg and Vienna and the plebiscite less than a month later, however, suggest an outcome other than simple victimhood. The bloodless invasion quickly led to the vicious persecution via spontaneous pogroms against Jews and other innovations in Nazi "ethnic cleansing."[25] Nazi policy also included the neutralization of the authoritarian government that itself had pushed aside democracy in Austria in early 1933.

Although Habsburg loyalists, Socialists, and Jews in 1938 were certainly victimized by invading National Socialists, it is evident that a vast majority of Austrians embraced the *Anschluss* as righting an old wrong worked by Bismarck and corrected by

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[23] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Ahmedabad: Jaico Publishing House, 2012), 1.

[24] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 13.

[25] A term popularized in the 1990s after the Bosnian War, "ethnic cleansing" has been retroactively applied to the Holocaust; Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*, 1.

Hitler. Irredentism and revanchism in Europe make no sense without taking into account the case of Austria in the inter war period and its half-coerced, half-voluntary incorporation into Hitler's Germany in the spring of 1938. In order to make sense of this story, however, one must assess a longer record of nationalism in central Europe.

This chapter elucidates the evolution of the idea of Pan-Germanism within the Habsburg Empire and the territories of the First Austrian Republic (1918–1938) and analyzes the popular and political sentiment concerning a greater Germany. This chapter shows how these factors affected the ultimate political actions that resulted in the successful invasion and annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany.

A.   PAN-GERMANISM IN AUSTRIA

Despite the efforts of the House of Bourbon and the Porte in Constantinople over a period of centuries until the 18th century, the Habsburg Empire emerged as the leading power of Central Europe with little regard for nations in the modern sense of this term in the 17th and 18th centuries. Via a policy of peaceful coalitions and warlike alliances and conquests, especially in the wake of Ottoman retreat from the Danube after the 17th century, the Habsburg Empire symbolized the continuation of the 1st German Reich. It also comprised the nations and nationalities along the Danube and the Balkans in a multinational dynastic empire focused on the estates of the church, the court, the army and its administration. The Josephine epoch of reform despotism in Enlightenment Europe included the steps of administrative reform and, joined with the French Revolution, presently gave energy to the nationalities conflicts that emerged in the transition from the 18th to the 19th century. These phenomena were especially fateful in Central Europe and in what eventually went from medieval and classical Germany after 1648 in the early modern period to the modern order of nation states in central Europe with the attempt by the nations of central Europe to become nation states on the western European model. Here the idea of Greater Germany became a central idea in the process

of folklore, propaganda, and mass movement associated with the practice of the cultural nation.[26]

As a prelude to this story, however, in 1784, the reformist son of Empress Maria Theresa, Emperor Joseph II, issued a linguistic decree making German the official language of government and commerce in the Hapsburg Empire. This edict concerned the estates of administration and economics as well as culture, but was devoid of the nationalist meaning that came to be associated with such a measure in the hyper-charged atmosphere of politics a century later. The use of German in this regard was akin to the contemporary use of English in the globalized computer or aviation activities, and had no political meaning, per se. The decree was a measure to increase the efficiency of a multi-lingual empire, that is, its interoperability, where German was spoken in more provinces than any other language.[27] In the decades that followed, with the impact of the French Revolution on the nations of Central Europe, the process of folklore, propaganda, and mass movement operated among those social and political groups who identified with the nation as a cultural entity devoid of its home in a strong state. This process unfolded in French-occupied western Germany and Tyrol, where Vienna had more or less been the leading metropole until 1806, and spread after 1815 to Budapest, Prague, Warsaw, Belgrade and beyond.

The idea of the nation and nation state on the cultural foundation was, in turn, repressed for a generation by the post-1815 Congress Europe led by Prince Metternich in the Habsburg attempt to crush the ideas of the French revolution together with the combined energies of the Northern Courts of Petersburg, Berlin and Vienna.[28] With the outbreak of the Revolutions of 1848 in Central Europe, however, the Austro-Germans began their nationalistic awakening with the fate of either a Greater Germany or a Smaller Germany, in which the Habsburg crown lands (Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, and

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[26] Ivan T. Berend, *History Derailed: Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press), 41–133.

[27] Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938–1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2000), 5; Berend, *History Derailed*, 34.

[28] Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800–1914*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 45.

Slovenia, etc.) bulked as an enduring issue. National movements developed among the Italian, Czech, and Hungarian minorities of the empire from 1789 until 1848, and the German-speakers grew to feel threatened, especially as the *Klein Deutschland* concept emerged as an option for German unity with the advent of Bismarck's chancellery in 1862.[29] The Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and subsequent unification of Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm I in 1871 meant that the Deutsch Österreicher, who for a thousand years had been the core of the Reich, was unceremoniously shunted to the periphery. They were now lodged among Slavs and Magyars, with a united Germany towering over them. The hunger of the subject peoples of the crown lands for their own nation states only became more intense after the *Ausgleich* of 1866 in which the Habsburg Empire had been divided into its western and eastern halves with the recognition of Hungarian national status.[30]

1.   Role Models of a Dictator

In the waning years of the Habsburg Empire after 1866, the presence of pro-national Greater German attitudes was evident in day-to-day life. When Emperor Franz Joseph and his entourage paraded through Linz in Upper Austria, schoolchildren had to be instructed explicitly that they were not to greet the Emperor with the "Heil!" of German-nationals, but the Habsburg "Hoch!" Pan-Nationalist displays were surreptitiously celebrated with the adornment of cornflowers, the singing of "Deutschland Über Alles" instead of the imperial anthem, and the display of red, black, and gold colors. A young Hitler was scolded by Habsburg teachers for arranging his red, black, and gold pencils in a show of nationalist pride in an empire that resisted integral nationalism as it manifested itself after 1880. Bound by loyalty to the Habsburgs as civil servants, the high school teachers of the dual monarchy encouraged their students to "study diligently lest we in Austria lose our leading role."[31]

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[29] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 6.

[30] Gildea, *Barricades and Borders*, 201–12.

[31] Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 13–17.

The massive influx of immigrants to Vienna from the mid-19th century onward from such provinces as Moravia and Galicia strengthened the xenophobic core of the movement—particularly against middle class and assimilated Jews who remained loyal to the court. The vibrant and vicious Pan-German political movement in Vienna from the late 19th and early 20th centuries had a lasting impact on the civil consciousness of and the future architect of the *Anschluss*—Adolf Hitler. Georg Ritter von Schönerer was the most influential personality in the Pan-German movement of the fin de siècle. Schönerer notably joined anti-Semitic dogma with Pan-German rhetoric in Habsburg Austria after 1890. Popular with the growing middle classes, von Schönerer's movement was "anti-Habsburg, antiliberal, anti-Catholic, anti-capitalist, antisocialist, and, above all, anti-Semitic."[32] Even though discrimination against Jews was legally abolished during the reign of Emperor Francis Joseph I, anti-Semitic rhetoric was ubiquitous in Austrian politics with a long tradition reaching back to the Counter Enlightenment and episodic expulsions of Jews amid crises.[33] Schönerer's use of ethnic hatred as an explanation for the social and political tribulations of a multi-ethnic empire made anti-Semitic and xenophobic attitudes central to the Pan-German movement.[34] Although Schönerer lost his parliamentary seat in 1907 and likely never met the future dictator, Hitler was witness to the demagogue's cult of personality in the Vienna of the turn of the century.[35] Schönerer's influence persisted as his young disciples went on to dominate municipal life in multiple provinces as civic figures,[36] as well as political figures in Vienna.[37] These individuals ensured that xenophobia as the lowest common denominator became a leading feature of political life, with the answer resting with union with the German Reich.

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[32] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 6.

[33] Ibid., 22.

[34] Ibid., 24.

[35] Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 236.

[36] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 7.

[37] Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 254.

Schönerer was not alone in his fear-mongering, and politicians exploited mass politics in the polls in the 1880s and 1890s.[38] The charismatic Catholic politician Karl Lueger—a staunch anti-Semite and colleague of Schönerer—founded the Christian Social Party between 1888 and 1889 and was elected Mayor of Vienna in 1897.[39] Extremely popular and well-loved for his modernization and Germanization of the capital, Lueger was lauded by Hitler as "the greatest German mayor of all times," and the failed art student was in attendance at his funeral procession in 1910.[40]

Two more Pan-German Schönerian disciples had an enormous effect on Hitler: Karl Hermann Wolf and Franz Stein. Wolf was a journalist-turned-politician whose successes and view of Czechs as "the main enemy"[41] would eventually distance him from his original patron in Schönerer.[42] Stein, a fierce advocate of German workers and founder of the "German National Workers Association,"[43] was known for blatant attacks on the Habsburgs in favor of the annexation of peripheral provinces by the German empire.[44] The politicians, however, were extremely divided on the extremity of their dogma of whether Czechs or Jews were the "main enemy." The politicians would frequently hurl insults at each other publicly and in propaganda as they vied for similar electoral districts.[45] Living in Vienna from 1908 to 1913, Adolf Hitler was deeply influenced by these political figures and the anti-Semitic, xenophobic, Pan-German doctrine they espoused.[46] A young, impressionable painter in the men's hostels, Hitler would carry these convictions through the rest of his political career.

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[38] Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918–1938* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2014), 7.

[39] Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 247.

[40] Ibid., 299–300.

[41] Ibid., 268.

[42] Ibid., 261–272.

[43] Ibid., 255.

[44] Ibid., 257.

[45] Ibid., 264.

[46] Ibid., 165.

## 2.	Interwar Currents of *Anschluss*

In the twilight of the World War I in the phase 1916–1918, the dissolution of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire presented a brief moment of promise for an *Anschluss* of the German nation. Ostensibly the only force keeping German–Austria from unification with the German Reich, the polyglot empire's death throes proved hopeful for Pan-Germans. On October 14, 1918, in the final moments of his time as virtual dictator of wartime Germany, Erich von Ludendorff penned a letter to the German Foreign Ministry stating that "the question is increasingly being discussed whether the time has not come to prepare the *Anschluss* [of Austria] with the German Reich."[47] Nevertheless, the concept of Ludendorff and other generals consisted of a more authoritarian approach to ensure "military and political domination in the East."[48] Conceived before the German plea for an armistice, the Versailles Treaty, and the Treaty of St. Germain, this concept seems wishful in retrospect. Allied—particularly French—security concerns about a resurgent Germany stymied these aspirations quickly and decisively. Furthermore, the economic crises of the interwar period served to exacerbate the German nationalist sentiment in Austria fueled by ethnic resentment. While the radical right in Austria was by no means a united front for an *Anschluss* with Germany, it fostered an environment that was not hostile to the concept.

As the Habsburg Empire was crumbling in late 1918, a new German–Austrian (Deutsch-Österreich) state ratified a constitution that declared "German Austria is an integral part of the German Republic." Its provisional Chancellor—Karl Renner—gave an ardent speech on the day of ratification acknowledging the desperate state of the German people, and reassuring them that "German people in all regions should know that we are of one tribe and one mind."[49] Originally created as an autonomous state within the German Reich with Vienna sharing capital status, it was an effort by the Pan-German elements of the socialist movements in Austria. The polity would be short-lived.

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[47] Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss*, 1.

[48] Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 47.

[49] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 2.

According to French Foreign Minister Stéphen Pichon, the victors "must see that Germany is not given an opportunity to rebuild her strength by utilizing the Austrian populations."[50] Accordingly, Germany was forced to acknowledge in Article 80 of the Versailles Treaty that it would "respect strictly the independence of Austria."[51] In September 1919, German–Austria would sign the Treaty of St. Germain that had a parallel clause: "The independence of Austria is inalienable …. Consequently, Austria undertakes … to abstain from any act which might directly or indirectly or by any means whatever compromise her independence, … by participation in the affairs of another power."[52] Georges Clemenceau and Woodrow Wilson allowed a caveat that the League of Nations could approve such actions, but France's interests would likely curb any such ambitions.[53] The Pan-German aspirations of Austria were dashed with these agreements and German–Austria became the Republic of Austria with the National Assembly's declaration that "in pursuance of the State Treaty of Saint Germain the previous legal provision under which German Austria was declared an integral part of the German Reich ceases to be in force."[54]

The downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the controversial peace settlements resulted in a drastic increase in Pan-German sentiment in the Austrian populace and government, despite the post-war agreements.[55] The transition from an Empire to a small state aggravated the Austro-German identity crisis and resulted in the deepening of political rifts concurrent with economic discord.[56] Provinces took their own initiatives. Tyrol and Vorarlberg severed diplomatic ties with Vienna and sent embassies to Switzerland. Tyrol, Salzburg, and Styria all held plebiscites to join the German Reich with staggering results in the affirmative.[57] Furthermore, despite reaffirming the Treaty

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[50] Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss*, 2.

[51] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 1.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss*, 2.

[54] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 3.

[55] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 11.

[56] Ibid., 8.

[57] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 3.

of St. Germain in order to receive a loan from the League of Nations, Austria coordinated railroad, traffic, probate law, and visa regulations with the German Republic. The Austrian Army also changed its traditional green uniforms to emulate the German field gray in light of a general admiration of the German military's prowess.[58] These changes were all met with public acclaim. Nevertheless, when Austria and Germany sought a customs union under the auspices of Pan-European economic cooperation, it was met with resistance from the League of Nations and led to devastating results.

Austria's "inability to be self-sufficient" economically was reflected in its loan request from the League of Nations and its pursuit of customs union arrangements until 1931.[59] France's stipulation that Austria surrender domestic control of its financial system, however, was politically infeasible. In a display of suspicion and its relatively strong financial position, France withdrew all its assets from the Austrian *Creditanstalt* and precipitated a ruinous economic crisis[60] that resulted in the near-collapse of the Austrian banking sector, a dramatic slowdown of the Austrian industrial sector, and greater than 30 percent unemployment.[61]

The Pan-German sentiment of the late 19th century was imbued with a heavily xenophobic and anti-Semitic conviction by the conservative icons that championed the German nationalist movement in Vienna and in provinces with markedly German culture. Growing up on the periphery of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Adolf Hitler was exposed to Pan-German influences from an early age and later immersed in these political circles during his residency in the capital. Moreover, European security concerns over a resurgent Germany prohibited any political or economic unions following World War I, despite Austrian and German political will from the left and right. The dogma of the fiercest advocates of—and opponents to—a united Germany and Austria does not necessarily explain the outpouring of support as Nazi vehicles rolled across the border. In

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[58] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 11; Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 4.

[59] Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss*, 3.

[60] Ibid., 26.

[61] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 17.

the next section, the popular sentiment of the Austrian people is analyzed in conjunction with the political rifts that would eventually lead to the fall of the First Austrian Republic.

B.   POPULAR SENTIMENT BEFORE THE *ANSCHLUSS*

Images of masses in Austria waving Swastika flags as they welcomed goose-stepping soldiers abounded in the newsreels of Nazi Germany. When asked in a referendum in April 1938, "Are you in agreement with the reunification of Austria and the German Reich that occurred in 13 March 1938 and do you support the candidates of our Fuehrer Adolf Hitler?" more than two thirds of the population voted, and more than 99 percent in the affirmative.[62] Despite these deceptively glowing displays of approval, studies suggest that the majority preferred independence to German rule, but deep political divisions, domestic unrest, and economic strife left Austrians envious of German progress and ready for a drastic change from the struggles since 1918. The small German Austrian state was not viewed as a viable polity by most Austrians, and unification with Germany was a desired goal in the years from 1918 to 1938, despite the efforts of some Austrians to secure support for a new national identity. A vicious domestic struggle just short of civil war, however, left the First Republic of Austria vulnerable to its dominant neighbor.

1.   The People

Demographic shifts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries instilled a xenophobic attitude in borderlands and the capital that only heightened with the onset of the interwar economic crisis. As many citizens' employment was threatened by foreigners, contempt for the political system grew amid social unrest from embattled paramilitary groups and labor organizations. All the while, their German neighbor was rebounding. Although the majority of Austrians did not subscribe to the tenets of National Socialism, they welcomed change and hoped for prosperity. Nevertheless, the long-standing history of xenophobia and ethnic hatred in Austria was evident as the minority fervently embraced Nazi principles with disproportionate involvement in the regime's institutions.

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[62] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 9–11.

As previously noted, the substantial influx of Jewish immigrants was a significant pillar of Pan-German politics. Between 1857 and 1910, the Jewish diaspora grew to comprise 8.63 percent of the Austrian population. Since the Jewish migrants were typically skilled and well educated, the established tradesmen and small-businesses grew to resent their competitors almost instantaneously. By 1910, Jews comprised "71 percent of Vienna's financiers, 63 percent of its industrialists, 65 percent of its lawyers, 59 percent of its physicians, and over half of its journalists."[63] This control of the middle strata by a distinctly different ethnic group fostered resentment among the students and pre-industrial artisans who were threatened by the competition.[64]

On the labor front, the Austrian working class faced a similar migrant flow due to the growing industrial sector. Between 1880 and 1910, the number of factories in the outer districts of Habsburg Austria grew by 133 percent.[65] With the rise of railroads and modern transportation, the migrant flow—particularly of "unskilled Czechs"—increased sharply. This perceived threat led to the founding of the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei on the Bohemian-Silesian border. Led by and composed of workingmen who rebuffed the canons of Marxism and internationalism, the party was the direct precursor to the Austrian Nazi Party.[66] The discord between German nationalist and Czech politicians in the decades prior to the fall of the Habsburg dynasty was calamitous, routinely escalating to violent brawls in Parliament.[67] As Czechs grew to comprise one-fifth of the population of Vienna by 1910, German–Austrians began to fear the "Slavization" of their homeland,[68] because the demographic trend was perceived as not just un-German, but anti-German.[69]

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[63] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 23.

[64] Ibid., 6.

[65] Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 150.

[66] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 8.

[67] Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 247–48.

[68] Ibid., 305.

[69] Ibid., 320.

These demographic pressures would be further amplified following World War I and the economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s. Since much of the Austro-Hungarian empire's wealth was generated from trade, the high tariffs among the successor states and the broken pattern of regional commerce after the war devastated the economy. Furthermore, the withdrawal of French assets from the *Creditanstalt* mentioned earlier plunged the banking sector toward collapse in 1931.[70] While the Austrian economic situation was worsening, however, Austrians saw the National Socialist system across the border after 1933 generating jobs and creating what was presented as an increasingly classless society. The contrast to the Christian Social Party's organic state enacted by the Dollfuss regime was evident. Germany was a country whose military might and culture were admired and shared, and the rural and working classes of Austria pined for similar achievements.[71] In Vienna, though, political rifts were deepening and social unrest was rising toward civil war.

2.   The Politics

Although Pan-Germanism was a goal on both the left and the right in Austria following the World War I, such hopes were dashed by the Little Entente with the Versailles and St. Germain treaties and the affiliation of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia with French statecraft in Central Europe. The ensuing political struggle for control between 1918 and 1938 was vicious, bordering on near-civil war. In-fighting not only between the left and right, but also within the conservative right would eventually pave the way to invasion. Politicians vied for parliamentary majorities and intellectuals to support their ideologies. The right bestowed the moniker of "Red Vienna" in order to portray the city as a bastion of socialism and as a caution against Marxist and Bolshevist forces.[72] While Austrian politics were certainly left-leaning in the interwar period, conservatives maintained a powerful and dynamic opposition. With the shift toward

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[70] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 11–12.

[71] Ibid., 21.

[72] Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 1.

authoritarian fascism in the late 1920s, Austrian politics and their quarrelsome character paved the way for the *Anschluss*.

The early inter-war years were fraught with confusion as the former Habsburg Empire tried to adjust to national identities and new borders set out in the Treaties. Of the ten and a half million German Austrians in the empire, only six and a half million would remain in the new Austrian republic.[73] The immediate aftermath of the Treaties saw the aforementioned provincial plight of self-determination in Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Salzburg, and Styria. When the post-war dominance of the leftist Social Democrats shifted right with the elections of 1920 and the emergence of the Christian Social Party as the largest, Austria became governed by a "series of conservative 'bourgeois' coalitions" to restore the state to its previous grandeur and "normalcy."[74] These "Black Viennese" (i.e., pro-clerical) forces were, however, hardly homogenous; their only uniting values being "radical anti-Semitism, German nationalism, *volkish* authoritarianism, anti-Enlightenment (and antimodernist) thinking, and corporatism" around a common program of "defeating social democracy, replacing democratic, capitalist Austria, excluding Jews and foreigners, and restoring German and Austrian greatness."[75]

The strife between the left (Social Democrats) and the right (Christian Social Party members and German Nationalists) would come to a head in the civil disturbances of 1927 and marked a distinct turning point as Austria descended toward fascism. Both left and right parties had been organizing paramilitary forces since the early 1920s. A clash between a veterans' group and the Social Democrats' *Schutzbund* in the village of Schattendorf in the eastern province of Burgenland—itself a site of nationalities conflicts—left a veteran and a child dead. A jury in Vienna later exonerated the accused. In response, massive Socialist demonstrations and protests set fire to the Vienna Palace of Justice, an uprising that was only subdued when police opened fire on the crowds, killing

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[73] Steven Beller, *Concise History of Austria* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 200.

[74] Ibid., 205–07.

[75] Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 6–8.

nearly ninety people.[76] This violence opened a phase of civil war that only ended in March 1938 with the *Anschluss*. When Social Democrats called for a state-wide strike, newly-elected Chancellor Ignaz Seipel "embraced…authoritarian rhetoric" and utilized paramilitary organizations like the fascist Heimwehr to subdue the uprising.[77]

Rising authoritarianism in 1930s Austria saw the growth of a cancerous movement within it, Nazism. In conflict with the Christian Social fascism based on the Italian model, the Austrian Nation Socialist German Workers' Party was a marginal movement fraught with in-fighting before 1931. Nevertheless, it started to gain electoral victories in Vienna, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Styria, and Carinthia by 1930, even winning 41 percent of the vote in Innsbruck in 1933.[78] While Austrian politics were certainly descending into fascism, Nazism was markedly too radical for most right-wing Austrian politicians. The Austrian SA and SS[79] resorted constantly to methods of terrorism to reach Nazism's goal to undermine the government. The threat from Nazism and the schism it created among conservatives served to accelerate the transition to authoritarianism after 1932.[80] Englebert Dollfuss became Chancellor in 1932 in the wake of the financial crisis following the 1931 failed customs union. Following an unpopular loan from the League of Nations, German Nationalists, Nazis, and Social Democrats all called for new elections. In the face of an impending defeat, Dollfuss suspended the parliament and slid further into fascist rule.[81]

On one front, Dollfuss attempted in 1933–34 to suppress the leftist opposition domestically at the behest of his main supporter and patron—Benito Mussolini. Fearing rising German power as well as the older goals of statecraft among the marginal powers, the Italian dictator sought a fascist Danubian front against the French-dominated Little

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[76] Barbara Jelavich, *Modern Austria: Empire & Republic, 1815–1986* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986), 183–84.

[77] Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 128.

[78] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 12.

[79] The Sturmabteilung (SA) and Schutzstaffel (SS) were paramilitary branches of the Nazi Party.

[80] Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 9.

[81] Jelavich, *Modern Austria*, 194.

Entente and a buffer from the rising power of Germany.[82] Pressures on the left broke in February 1934 when Heimwehr forces provoked a socialist uprising in Linz. In protest of a search for arms, Schutzbund forces opened machine gun fire on police.[83] When socialist leaders in Vienna called for a general strike, government armed forces and police joined in the violence across the nation. Vicious fighting ensued for four days, especially in the capital, where more than a hundred government troops and more than 1,000 socialists were killed.[84] The brief civil war resulted in the disbandment of the Social Democrats, the filling of concentration camps, and the drafting of a constitution that codified a fascist state in the so-called *Ständestaat*.[85]

On a second front, the consolidation of power by Hitler's Nazis in Berlin and the meteoric rise of the Austrian Nazi party in Vienna made Dollfuss suspicious of an impending Nazi takeover. Terrorist bombings rocked the country, and Berlin imposed a 1,000 RM tourist tax that brought the tourism industry—one of Austria's most lucrative—to a standstill. Dollfuss responded with the abolishment of the Nazi party in Austria in May 1934.[86] The Chancellor's instincts were well founded: a memorandum by the Foreign Ministry in Berlin in 1930 posited that "union with Austria…should be the most urgent task of German policy," and was accompanied with the appointment of a Gauleiter in Vienna by Hitler.[87] Hitler "ordered an end to direct attacks on the Austrian government" in March 1934 and elucidated with Mussolini in Spa in June 1934 that he just wanted Dollfuss replaced, not the annexation of Austria.[88] Still, the Führer could not control the actions of his Austrian compatriots nor the plotting of his armed formations and a putsch was attempted by Austrian SA and SS in July. The goal of the coup, led by Austrian Nazis in the ranks of the Austrian Army and police, was to storm the government building, take Dollfuss hostage, and form a Nazi-led government.

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[82] Jelavich, *Modern Austria*, 199–200.

[83] Ibid., 201.

[84] Beller, *Concise History of Austria*, 223.

[85] Ibid., 224.

[86] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 13.

[87] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 4.

[88] Jelavich, *Modern Austria*, 204.

Mismanaged and poorly-planned, the government was aware of the plot, and provincial Nazi organizations were not given sufficient notice to prepare local takeovers.[89] Dollfuss was shot in the process of the seizure of power in his office on the Ballhausplatz in Vienna, however, and he was denied a doctor and a priest while he bled to death for two and a half hours. After the counter attack, the conspirators surrendered later that afternoon.[90] The action was widely condemned by domestic and international observers, and Mussolini massed troops on the Brenner Pass border and pledged military support for Austria in the event of an attempted German invasion.[91] Mussolini's reaction deterred any German opportunism, and Kurt von Schuschnigg succeeded Dollfuss.

The *Ständestaat* under both Dollfuss and Schuschnigg exhibited anti-Semitic undercurrents, albeit not the radical measures prescribed by Schönerer and his disciples. Although the May Constitution officially espoused religious equality, many Jews lost their jobs or were denied promotions after February 1934. Jews not only represented the outsider threat perceived by most Austrians and the right, but also tended to be left-leaning. Moreover, several leading intellectuals who supported and advocated leftist policies were of Jewish descent, such as Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler—who both fled the country in exile.[92] While fascist Austria was better for Jews than the coming Nazi rule, it still had an intrinsic anti-Semitism that was deep-rooted.[93] Indeed, "the Nazis differed from the other parties 'only in their willingness to use violence against Jews.'"[94]

The *Ständestaat*, while markedly Pan German with its idea that Austria manifested a superior ideal of a German nation, advocated an independent Austria as part of a tradition of many German states within a German nation. Dollfuss, Schuschnigg, and other "Austrofascists" considered Austria a German state. However, they conceived it as

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[89] Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss*, 100.

[90] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 14.

[91] Beller, *Concise History of Austria*, 225.

[92] Ibid., 224; Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 159.

[93] Beller, *Concise History of Austria*, 224.

[94] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 23.

a better and more cosmopolitan German state.[95] There was also a revitalization of Monarchist sentiment as many anti-Habsburg laws were repealed in 1935 and more than 1,000 municipalities granted honorary citizenship to the surviving heir—Otto von Habsburg, the son of the last Kaiser Karl.[96] The Monarchists (*Österreichische Aktion*) also advocated further revanchist claims to former Habsburg territories and had congruent interests with most Pan-Germans, although they were resolutely against an *Anschluss* and a Prussian-dominated German Reich.[97] Like the Monarchists, much of the Austrian right advocated an anti-Republican, authoritarian, and anti-Semitic regime, but were not satisfied with the *Ständestaat* and demanded more radical measures.[98] Nevertheless, most of the right rejected Nazism as they were "caught between two stools," according to radical anti-liberal philosopher Othmar Spann, in rejecting both Nazism and "Austrofascism."[99] This internal debate and struggle among the conservatives in Vienna would "pave the way for Hitler."[100]

The tide changed in 1936 with the ebbing of support from Mussolini as he pursued the Ethiopian imperialism that dictated détente and entente with Germany. The Italian dictator's support gave Schuschnigg's *Ständestaat* resilience against increased pressure from Nazi Germany. When Mussolini shifted his support from Austria to Germany following the Ethiopian War in May 1936, the "Austrofascist" regime "switched from allying with Italy and Austrian fascists to placating Germany."[101] This state of affairs heralded the beginning of the end, even if the statecraft itself was less violent in detail. In July 1936, Schuschnigg signed a "gentlemen's agreement" with Germany's Ambassador to Vienna, Franz von Papen, the ex-officer and man of intrigue who had helped Hitler into power a few years earlier. Although the agreement acknowledged Vienna's independence and lifted the economic sanctions, it also absolved

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[95] Beller, *Concise History of Austria*, 225,

[96] Jelavich, *Modern Austria*, 208–09.

[97] Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 133–34.

[98] Ibid., 200.

[99] Ibid., 205.

[100] Ibid., 220.

[101] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 15; Beller, *Concise History of Austria*, 227.

imprisoned Austrian Nazis and established an "understanding that Austria would conduct its foreign policy as a 'German state.'"[102] The agreement legalized a terrorist organization and guaranteed quasi-subjugation to its dominant neighbor. With Mussolini promising non-intervention in exchange for South Tyrol in September 1937, Germany gained the leverage it needed over Austria. On February 12, 1938, the Nazis embraced a less gentlemanly approach. After Ambassador von Papen invited Schuschnigg to the Eagle's Nest just across the border, Hitler "terrorized" Schuschnigg and presented him with an ultimatum as well as plans to invade Austria if he was not compliant. The ultimatum included the release and reinstatement of all Nazis in Austria and the appointment of Arthur Seyss-Inquart—an Austrian Nazi—as Minister of the Interior and Security. After fulfilling the ultimatum, Schuschnigg scrambled for domestic support, but he was unwilling to hand over the government to Otto Habsburg; and the already-diminished left declared that they would unite against Hitler, but not for Schuschnigg.

Schuschnigg's last effort in defiance of Nazi pressure would force Hitler's hand and precipitate the invasion of Austria. Despite opposition from Mussolini, Schuschnigg announced a referendum to the Austrian people. They would be asked if they approved of "a free and German, independent and social, for a Christian and united Austria, for peace and work and the equality of all who declare themselves for Nation and Fatherland."[103] After hearing of the plebiscite on March 9, 1938, Hitler mobilized the military for Operation "Otto," wrote a letter to Mussolini requesting his approval for invasion, and issued three ultimatums on March 11: that Schuschnigg drop the referendum and resign his Chancellorship, that the cabinet resign and be reconstituted by Seyss-Inquart, and that President Miklas appoint Seyss-Inquart Chancellor. All three conditions were met by eleven o'clock that evening, and Schuschnigg ordered the Austrian Army not to fire a shot and egress to the east.[104] By then, Hitler had signed Directive No. 2 to approve the military invasion of Austria, and German troops crossed the border the morning of March

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[102] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 15.

[103] Jelavich, *Modern Austria*, 221.

[104] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 7–8.

12. Chancellor Seyss-Inquart held his office for only two days before signing the "Reunification of Austria with the German Reich" into law on the 13.[105]

The cheering crowds of people adorned in Swastikas and lining the streets of Innsbruck and Vienna surprised even Hitler. Nevertheless, this glee was not ubiquitous throughout the country as different provinces and cities met the invading soldiers with detached apathy and outright scorn.[106] The Nazis wasted little time in fulfilling their agenda. Starting on March 12, an extreme and concentrated propaganda campaign rolled out in Austria in preparation for the referendum on April 10 concerning the invasion and *Anschluss*. Although, according to Schuschnigg, more than two thirds of Austrians were in favor of independence after the invasion,[107] the following month would turn that tide. Systematic terror was enacted in coordination with the propaganda as more than 21,000 Austrians were detained and sent to concentration camps in March and April alone;[108] anti-Semitic violence erupted as beatings, murders, humiliations, and arrests spread through Vienna "as if medieval pogroms had reappeared in modern dress."[109] Moreover, the referendum was given public support by Austrian figureheads: Catholic Bishops and Cardinals hailed the bloodless invasion and defense against "godless Bolshevism," while even the former Chancellor and Social Democrat, Karl Renner, declared that he would be voting in support of the *Anschluss* despite his disapproval of its method.[110] Distraught with economic hardship and frustrated with their own political system, Austrians voted a resounding "yes" at the behest of their religious and political leadership.

Austria was declared as the "first victim of Hitlerite aggression" by the Allies in 1943, but it is evident that the majority of Austrians did not see themselves as such. The Austrian State was absolutely a victim in 1938, but many of its citizens actively participated in Nazi policies and endeavors. Although Austrians only comprised eight

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[105] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 8.

[106] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 33.

[107] Ibid., 22.

[108] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 10.

[109] Ibid., 15.

[110] Ibid., 10.

percent of the German Reich's population, they made up 14 percent of the SS, 40 percent of the personnel, and 75 percent of the commandants in the extermination camps at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.[111] While the Austrian people certainly suffered under the Nazi regime, the suffering derived from the aerial bombing campaigns of the Allies, service in the Wehrmacht and other Nazi organizations, and Nazi persecution of certain minorities.[112] Austria's "victim myth" persisted through the accounts of post-war Austrian politicians' own stories of persecution, in contrast with the Germans' "collective guilt."[113] Nevertheless, it is apparent that the history of Pan-Germanism in Austria fostered a sentiment among its majority that could be manipulated to general acceptance of the Nazi invasion and seizure of control. Despite the Monarchist, Socialist, "Austrofascist," and foreign forces within the country battling for Austrian independence, the desire for political change and dissatisfaction with the status quo of the population resulted in a bloodless invasion and active participation in the Nazi regime.

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[111] Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 13–15.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., 17.

III. UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CRIMEAN ANNEXATION

Ernest Renan states that "forgetting, and…historical error are an essential factor in the creation of a nation."[114] The history of Ukraine proves especially difficult to "get right" as its borders and sovereigns have changed with the ebb and flow of the Habsburg, Russian, Soviet, and Nazi empires that controlled the territories that lie within modern Ukraine. As Ukrainian nationalist movements rose and fell in modern times, different interpretations of the past emerged and vanished with these shifts of power. The controversy as to whether there is a unique Ukrainian nation or whether Ukraine belongs in the Russian nation has led to a political and cultural rift in modern Ukraine and Russia. The situation has become confusing for Russians, Ukrainians and people of other nations. Russia—Ukraine's more powerful, although arguably "younger" neighbor—considers Ukraine within Moscow's sphere of influence. Russia deems itself Ukraine's national patron and thus of its blood and soil. Ukraine's fate seems torn between East and West and between Putin's Eurasian Economic Union and Merkel's European Union: an independent gateway between the East and the West, a satellite of its former imperial sovereign, and a privileged partner of the key Euro-Atlantic institutions (NATO and the EU).

This chapter is divided into three parts: the first section analyzes the history of Ukraine and how its various influences have led to the evolution of significantly different identities within its borders and how it is perceived by its neighbors. Section B evaluates the history of the Crimean Peninsula and how it resulted in markedly different national sentiments and its role in Russian-Ukrainian relations. Section C chronicles and evaluates the 2014 annexation of Crimea in the context of the previous two sections.

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[114] Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" in *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present: A Reader*, ed. Stuart Joseph Woolf (London: Routledge, 1996), 50.

A.   UKRAINIAN NATIONALIST DEVELOPMENT

The proto-Ukrainian state of Kievan Rus[115] of ancient lineage is claimed as the predecessor and founding myth of both the Ukrainian and Russian nations. Nevertheless, as Ernest Renan reminded his readers, the idea of a shared destiny in the past and present is essential to form a nation. Both nations regard the Rus as their founding myth and medieval forebear.[116] The centuries of Russian imperial rule of the Ukrainians have resulted in a perception of the Ukrainians by the Russians that is central to their national destiny as a great power and to Russia's singular mission of religion and culture. Furthermore, since various empires ruled the territory of modern Ukraine, distinct policies on nationality rights led to Ukrainian identities developing asymmetrically, tangentially, or not at all, depending on the region. This evolution has resulted in significantly diverse political tendencies within Ukraine, including a bifurcation between the western and eastern points of the compass.

1.   Common Roots?

The early medieval kingdom of the Kievan Rus is shared by Ukrainians, Russians, and Belarussians as the nascent entity from which these nation states have descended. The area ruled by the Rus covered western and central Ukraine, most of modern Belarus, and western Russia. The Rus were a "loose union of principalities" that were nearly perpetually at war with each other, particularly between the northern and southern domains. Evidence to the unity of the clans, however, lies mainly in the ancient epic poem from the late 12th century, "The Lay of Ihor's Host," that portrays the fall of Prince Ihor as he rallies the Kievan Rus to push back the Polovtsian steppe invaders, although unsuccessfully.[117] The early unification of the Rus, however loose and circumstantial, created the concept of a pseudo-kingdom where the southern realms—particularly

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[115] Kieven Rus' was a loose federation of Slavic kingdoms between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*, 11–14.

[116] Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press), 19.

[117] Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2010), 87.

Kiev—held most of the power.[118] The Rus language was closer to modern Ukrainian than to modern Russian. While the Rus were Christian, their religion had no ties to Byzantium or Rome and resembled a "Christian universalism, [with] tolerance toward different religious centres."[119]

The sacking of Kiev by the Mongols in 1240 led to the relocation of the Kievan rulers to a more defensible position. Since the lower two-thirds of the Rus lands were occupied by the invading Mongols of the Golden Horde, Moscow became the seat of the Grand Duchy and the eventual precursor of the Russian Empire.[120] Russians consider the Rus to be their forebears and Kiev the "mother of Russian cities" as Moscow was the direct and only successor of Kiev, according to the *translatio imperii* theory. As such, the Rus are central to Russia's origins as a nation; and the Russians project the "tsardom" all the way to Volodymyr the Great of the 10th century, despite his having never used the title himself.[121] Nonetheless, Kiev—like Moscow—viewed itself as the successor to Kievan Rus. Although rebuilding was slow without the support of Poland, Hungary, or Serbia against Ukraine's Mongol occupants, a Ukrainian nation developed in this region. Thus, despite the claiming of the Kievan Rus as a founding myth for both Russian and Ukrainian national concepts, the Rus were simply "that which existed before the modern Ukrainian and Russian nations developed." It was between 1240 and the 1600s that truly separate Ukrainian and Russian identities developed,[122] and diverse narratives within Ukraine took shape.

2. "Little Russians"

In the 17th century, a Cossack Hetmanate rebelled against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Although the Cossacks' "quasi-military society…overlapped and

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[118] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 8.

[119] Ibid., *Ukrainians*, 11–12.

[120] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*, 110.

[121] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 31–32; Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 19.

[122] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 19–20.

interpenetrated"[123] with that of Kievan culture and other Rus lands, the Cossacks still remained a minority and the cultures never entirely merged into homogenous Rus, Ruthenian, or Ukrainian cultures.[124] Furthermore, the Hetmanate declared allegiance to the Russian Empire at the Council of Pereyaslav in exchange for protection against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1654. Ukrainian elites became more integrated into Russian society due to relatively similar cultures; and although certain Ukrainian cultural icons and even music were incorporated into Russian culture, the result was an extremely Russified elite caste among the Ukrainian Cossacks and an impoverished peasantry.[125] Consequently, once the nobility of the Hetmanate became assimilated into Russian culture, the concept of any distinct Ukrainian culture did not exist among the Russian elites.[126] Tsar Paul I, who reigned from 1796 to 1801, characterized his subjects as either Poles or Russians, Catholics or Orthodox. His binary categorical approach placed Ukrainians in a purgatorial existence: ally with their traditional rivals in Poland, or with Imperial sovereigns in Russia who did not acknowledge their existence as a distinct nation.[127] At the time of the Northern War, and the rise of Russia into the Pentarchy of the five great powers, in 1708 Hetman Ivan Mazepa and 3,000 Cossacks defected to Charles XII of Sweden when Tsar Peter I would not allocate resources to defend Hetmanate lands from Poland. According to Mazepa, the Tsar's refusal to help defend Hetmanate lands was a violation of the Treaty of Pereyaslav, but Mazepa's support for Sweden was viewed by the Tsar as the ultimate treachery against Russia.[128] Wary of rebellious elements in Ukraine, Russia's rulers took action to ensure that the next two hundred years in the Russian empire were markedly anti-Ukrainian. Even though education in Ukraine was scarce outside of the increasingly Russified nobility, the Ukrainian language was not taught out of fear of its subversive nature. This political and cultural repression served to strengthen Ukrainian nationalism even in the face of

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[123] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 70.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Plokhy, *Gates of Europe*, 103–04; *Wilson, Ukrainians*, 73–78.

[126] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*, 261; *Wilson, Ukrainians*, 83.

[127] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 40.

[128] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*, 224.

attempts to Russify the greater populace, although such efforts were limited only to the last two Tsars and had limited success due to several centuries of cultural development and poor education.[129]

A counterbalance to any Ukrainian nationalism was also the budding Pan-Slavic movement in the flowering of nationalism in Russia of the 19th century. Its multi-faceted perceptions and diverse agendas hurt and helped Ukrainian nationalist aspirations. The Decembrist uprising in 1825 and the suppression of the Polish rebellion in 1830 by Tsarist forces split the forces of Pan-Slavism into pro-Russian and anti-Russian camps.[130] Leftist Pan-Slavists pursued a Slavic Federation free of the European and Russian dynastic *ancien régimes*; this policy was clear in the first Pan-Slavic congress in Prague in 1848. In contrast, pro-Russian Pan-Slavism swung right with its dynastic foundation and transformed into the concept of a "Slavic Civilization" with Russia as its great protector. This idea portrayed the Germans and the Austrians as the eternal opponents of the Slavs and strengthened Russian nationalism, state centrism, and imperialism in the course of the 19th century in the face of German unification and the decline of the Habsburg Empire.[131]

Ukrainians under Russian rule experienced a deliberate and coordinated effort to undermine the development of a Ukrainian national identity because Ukraine was unlike other Russian territories. "Poland, Finland, and other borderlands did not give Russia her greatness" but Ukraine did.[132] The evolution under the Habsburgs resulted in something quite different.

3.   Ruthenians

The decline of medieval Poland and rise of Habsburg Austrian power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in Vienna's rule of both Poles and

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[129] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*; Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 78–79.

[130] Mikhail Suslov, "Geographical Metanarratives in Russia and the European East: Contemporary Pan-Slavism," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53, no. 5 (2012): 578, doi: 10.2747/1539-7216.53.5.575.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 83.

Ukrainians—called Ruthenians under Austria's rule of lands acquired in the partitions of Poland. Habsburg Ruthenians experienced an oblique evolution as they followed different paths in the same direction: trying to distinguish themselves from Poles where Romanov Ukrainians struggled to distinguish themselves from Russians.[133] The Ruthenian nationalist movement in Habsburg Ukraine, particularly in the region of Galicia, had a mainly linguistic driving force, in addition to cultural and intellectual variables. Linguists such as Ivan Mohylnytsky (1777–1831) maintained that the Ukrainian language was a separate language equal in standing to Czech, Polish, and Russian, instead of merely a dialect.[134] This idea created a cultural struggle because Poles viewed the Ukrainian peasantry as their historical right and obligation to civilize: they did not recognize Ukraine or Ukrainians, only a "pitiful type of Pole."[135] Such an attitude proved inflammatory in the 18th century when the Habsburg crown favored Poles to rule in Galicia.[136] Habsburg Emperor Joseph II's political and social reforms made elementary schooling in vernacular languages mandatory in 1781, in contrast to the Romanovs' less developed education programs. However, even though the Habsburg system allowed for schooling in the "Slaveno-Rusyn" language—the predecessor of modern Ukrainian—upward mobility was limited.[137] In Galicia, Polish rulers offered Polonization—assimilation into Polish culture—as the only options for Ruthenians.[138] Higher education was offered only in Polish or German, so the small Ruthenian elite was quickly stratified into Polonophiles or Ruthenian (i.e. Ukrainian) nationalists, with most choosing the former.[139] A third option for Ruthenians was to adopt the Habsburg dynastic Austrian-German identity—like the famous author Leopold von Sacher-Masoch

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[133] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 73.

[134] Berend, *History Derailed*, 117.

[135] Ibid., 257.

[136] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 102.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Berend, *History Derailed*, 257.

[139] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 102.

(1836–1895).[140] Such a choice was common under Habsburg rule in the nations of the various crown lands.

Despite this fragmenting effect, Ruthenians in Galicia established a rather stalwart national identity by the turn of the 19th century. Many members of the Ruthenian-Galician elite saw themselves as one nation split between two empires—although a number of the Eastern Orthodox clerical hierarchy saw "their kinsmen in the east" as a separate nation due to the preponderance of Russian Orthodoxy.[141] Clashing nationalistic sentiments between Galician Poles and Ruthenians in the revolutions of 1848 led the Ruthenians to declare to the Austrian Minister of the Interior that "Poles and Ruthenians, it is clear, cannot live together in peace," in a request to partition Galicia.[142] This friction between nationalities and nations would endure and result in a resolute local nationalism that distinguished the Ruthenians from the Poles by the turn of the century; however, the imperial borders that created "two nationalities on one ethnographic base" would crumble with their empires after World War I.[143]

4.   Struggle for National Statehood

The modern state of Ukraine was a product of World War I and the dissolution of the empires that had ruled it. Ukrainians were not referred to as such until their official independence was won in 1918. Since Ukraine had been invaded by Imperial German forces, Ukraine was able to gain its independence from Soviet Russia via the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. As previously mentioned, however, the national movement leading up to this point was not only fractured between two distinctly different groups of people but also almost exclusively confined to the elites that sought to further their socio-political agendas. According to an unnamed British diplomat in 1918, "were one to ask the average peasant in the Ukraine his nationality, he would answer that he is Greek Orthodox; if pressed to say whether he is a Great Russian, a Pole, or a Ukrainian, he

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140 Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 106.

141 Berend, *History Derailed*, 117.

142 Ibid., 118.

143 Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 118.

would probably reply that he is a peasant; and if one insisted on knowing what language he spoke, he would say that he talked 'the local tongue.'"[144]

After the Bolsheviks' October 1917 coup in Petrograd overthrew the Provisional Government, the Ukrainian Central Rada struggled to defend itself from Bolshevik forces. Originally "little more than a coordinating committee of Ukrainophile political and cultural organizations," the Central Rada became the parliamentary body of Ukraine.[145] In January 1918, the Central Rada declared Ukraine's independence in order to secure a peace treaty with Hohenzollern Germany and Habsburg Austria for protection from invading Bolsheviks.[146] The Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) was a "Hetmanate" government that sought to establish a Ukrainian state close to modern Ukrainian borders, excluding Crimea and Western Galicia. The UNR claimed to represent the Ukrainian people despite the absence of any elected officials or a widely shared concept of Ukrainian identity.[147] Although a national flag, currency, and language were established, there was still a distinct internal division over language. Moreover, several political forces were contending within the borders—including Poles, supporters of both the Red and the White factions of the Russian Civil War, and anarchists. The Ukrainian nationalists had the weakest grasp on the country. Unable to organize its own military, the UNR secured military alliances with Germany and Austria in exchange for grain to feed their armies. After forcing out the Bolsheviks, the Germans dissolved the Rada out of fear of its socialist character and installed a leader that favored the land-owning class. The armistice signed on November 11, 1918, however, meant the withdrawal of the German and Austrian troops and the renewed vulnerability of Ukraine.[148]

Following the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War and the Soviet consolidation of power in 1921, Ukraine lost its short-lived independence and was

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[144] Figes, "Is There One Ukraine?" 60.

[145] Plokhy, *Gates of Europe*, 206.

[146] Ibid., 208.

[147] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 121–25.

[148] Plokhy, *History of Ukraine*, 209–12.

reintegrated with Russia under Soviet auspices. The Ukrainian independence movement during the civil war and Ukrainian support for the invading Kaiser's armies in World War I, however, were not forgotten by Soviet leaders.[149] Although devastating throughout the Soviet Union, Stalin's collectivization of agriculture in the 1930s was "clearly premeditated mass murder on the scale of millions" in Soviet Ukraine.[150] Attempting to eliminate the *kulak* class—affluent landlord farmers—Stalin sent 1.7 million Soviet citizens to the Gulag, and 300,000 of them were Ukrainian.[151] Furthermore, the "terror famine" brought on by state requisitioning and sealed borders would kill between six and eleven million Ukrainians.[152] Any peasant resistance was quashed viciously by Soviet agencies to ensure that no Mazepist tendencies could be fomented.

In addition, the Ukrainian capital was also shifted from the eastern city of Kharkiv to Kyiv, not necessarily to further suppress an already defeated nationalist movement but to create a new bastion of the Soviet proletariat in the heart of Ukraine and the cradle of Russian civilization. This would eventually backfire as the intelligentsia established a post-war cultural and civilizational symbol in the traditional Ukrainian capital as peasants were migrating to urban areas.[153]

Moreover, Soviet post-World War II policies concerning Ukraine would further contribute to an already existential rift in the population. The Ukrainian lands of the former Russian Empire were heavily Russified with the mass resettlement of ethnic Russians, thanks in part to the generally more Russophilic attitude of eastern Ukrainians, or "Little Russians." In contrast, after the annexation of Western Ukrainian territories in 1940–1941 and 1944–1945 there was no resettlement of Russians to those lands. As Ukrainian nationalists in the west resisted Soviet occupation, hundreds of thousands were killed or deported; and the area was heavily policed by the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy*

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[149] Figes, "Is There One Ukraine?" 60.

[150] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 43.

[151] Ibid., 27.

[152] Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 199.

[153] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 147.

Bezopasnosti (KGB) to prevent resurgent nationalism; however, no mass Russification occurred.[154] Southern and eastern Ukraine—particularly the industrial Donbas region—became a "multi-ethnic melting pot for all the peoples of the Empire" with a distinctly Russian culture.[155]

Concurrently, the Western Ukrainians' deep-seated hostility toward Russia continued to develop well into the 20th century. A Ukrainian nationalist movement smoldered through the 1960s and 1970s in Kiev, with several leaders imprisoned and sent to labor camps. Although the movement met with fervent Soviet opposition, Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika reforms allowed for Popular Fronts and advocacy for the Ukrainian language through the 1980s. This contributed to the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent independence of Ukraine and other former Soviet republics in 1991.[156]

As the Soviet Union collapsed and independence referenda were held in the Soviet Socialist Republics, it quickly became evident that Boris Yeltsin's concept of independence as "each republic [having] sovereignty, but we would all remain together" was not endorsed by Ukraine and other Soviet successor states.[157] On August 24, 1991, the Ukrainian SSR voted 346 to 1 for independence and in a December 1, 1991 referendum the people voted 90.3 percent for independence. Boris Yeltsin exclaimed, "What, even the Donbas voted yes?"[158] As the post-Soviet Ukrainian political structure formed in the 1990s it was still evident, though, that the divisions persisted. An informal coalition of Ukrainian Nationalists based in Western Galicia and "corporate lobbies and local barons" dominate the right-center and see internal Ukrainian divisions as unnatural. In their view, ethnic Russians are "colonists" or "denationalized Ukrainians…separated from their native tongue and culture by forcible policies of 'Russification.'"[159]

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[154] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 149.

[155] Ibid., 81.

[156] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*, 716–17; Plokhy, *Gates of Europe*, 313–15; Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 157–60.

[157] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 169.

[158] Yeltsin quoted in Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 170; Plokhy, *Gates of Europe*, 321.

[159] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 208.

Meanwhile, the Sovietized populations of the south and east maintained a "destructive opposition" in the left—although officially outlawed until 1993.[160] The presidential elections of the next fifteen years proved to be a stark representation of the internal divide in Ukraine as voting results showed a clear East/West divide; the candidates' policies see-sawed accordingly between pro-European and pro-Russian themes.[161]

Ukrainian history has undergone several transformations. A borderland between different cultural and civilizational zones, it has seen its own proto-kingdom in the Kievan Rus, been under the control of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and ruled by a minority Cossack Hetmanate only to come under the reign of several states in a relatively short period of time in the 18th to 20th centuries.[162] Historians have portrayed Ukraine as the progenitor of Russian civilization, replaced its early modern history with that of the Cossacks, and depicted it as a multi-ethnic realm descended from the Rus.[163] In contrast to what Renan considers "getting history wrong," Ukraine's history is rather that of a borderland between Eastern Europe and the Asian steppes it has spent its past shifting between.[164] Nonetheless, a peninsula that has been only recently associated with Ukraine has become a fulcrum between the geopolitical forces that Ukraine has been dealing with throughout its history as a "gateway state."[165]

B.   CRIMEAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Crimean Peninsula has been described by students of strategy as "the next Bosnia," "a new Nagorny Karabakh," and even "Kashmir."[166] It is the historical homeland of the now-minority Crimean Tatars and a symbol of their national identity. To

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[160] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 172.

[161] Plokhy, *Gates of Europe*, 331–36.

[162] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 118.

[163] Serhii Plokhy, "Between History and Nation: Paul Robert Magocsi and the Rewriting of Ukrainian History," *Nationalities Papers* 39, no 1 (2011): 117–19, doi: 10.1080/00905992.2010.532780.

[164] Ibid., 122.

[165] Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations* (3rd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 55.

[166] Gwendolyn Sasse, "The Crimean Issue," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 12, no. 1 (1996): 83, doi: 10.1080/13523279608415302.

Russians it was the warm water port for access to the Mediterranean, the "jewel in the crown of the empire," and a site of former military glory—although glorious defeat.[167] Ukrainians regard it as the "Cossacks' outlet to the sea" and within the sovereign borders internationally agreed upon.[168] The symbolic and strategic value of the peninsula has made it a historically contested territory between several groups. When Ukraine achieved independence from the USSR in 1991 with the peninsula included, Crimea became a key aspect of Ukrainian-Russian foreign relations.

1. From Batu Khan to Brest-Litovsk

Invaded in the 13th century by the Mongolian Golden Horde of Batu Khan—the same that sacked Kiev in 1240—Crimea was inhabited by Greek and Italian trading colonies and nomadic peoples of the Eastern steppes.[169] During the period of Mongol rule, Turkic nomads of the European and Asiatic steppe called Tatars started settling in Crimea. These Tatars established their own Khanate state as the Mongol empire crumbled around it in the 1420s, maintaining autonomy until the Ottoman conquest in 1475.[170] Under Ottoman rule, the Crimean Tatar Khanate developed a trade economy based primarily on the slave trade, sourced by annual forays into the Slavic lands to the north.[171] The peninsula became the stage of a struggle for the next several centuries as the Ottomans repulsed attacks from the Poles and Russians who vied for the strategic territory until Crimea was eventually annexed by Catherine the Great after a successful invasion in 1783 as part of the imperial expansion that is so central to the Russian sense of identity. Upon her conquest, the peninsula was ethnographically divided between the littoral communities whose Greek and Italian trading companies reflected their Mediterranean heritage, and the nomadic herding cultures of the Tatars, who closely

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[167] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 151.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Brian Glyn Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: From Soviet Genocide to Putin's Conquest* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016), xi–xv.

[170] Denis J. B. Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath of Its 1994 Presidential Election," *Post-Soviet Geography* 35, no. 4 (April 1994): 224.

[171] David R. Marples and David F. Duke, "Ukraine, Russia, and the Question of Crimea," *Nationalities Papers* 23, no. 2 (1995): 262, doi: 10.1080/00905999508408377.

resembled their Mongol and Ottoman progenitors. The Tatars had also overwhelmingly adopted the Islamic religion of their Ottoman rulers. Centuries of conflict with Tatar raiders and the Ottoman Empire manifested itself in a particularly oppressive Russian occupation. The recently de-feudalized Christian Russians also had a different concept of land ownership than the Islamic nomads and land was seized by Russian settlers.[172] Despite the difficulties of populating Crimea with Russian settlers due to the remoteness of the peninsula, it marked the first of several waves of Tatar emigration during Russian occupation, mainly to the lands of their ethnographic kin in the Ottoman Empire.[173] 300,000 Tatars left Crimea following Catherine's annexation in the 18th century, 30,000 more did so during the Russo-Turkish War of 1807–1811, and a further 230,000 did so after the Crimean War in 1853–1856.[174] These conflicts led Russians to a deep distrust of the Tatar population based on their Ottoman heritage.[175] By the turn of the century, the Tatars were only one-third of the Crimean population and the demographic shift continued to their disadvantage throughout the 19th century.[176]

2. Transition to Soviet Rule and World War II

As a result of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in January 1918, Crimea was included in the territory of the briefly independent Ukraine recognized by the Central Powers, but, once these nations were defeated in November 1918, the Bolsheviks quickly re-annexed Ukraine into the Soviet Union in 1921 after the Russian Civil War.[177] The Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) existed from 1921 to 1946, during which time Russian settlers continued to flow to the peninsula. Nevertheless, Tatar national identity was encouraged by Lenin's regime as a part of his "Great Friendship of Nations," and this played a pivotal role in developing a nationalist character in an increasingly

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[172] Williams, *Crimean Tatars*, 2–6.

[173] Ibid., 7.

[174] Marples and Duke, "Ukraine, Russia," 262–63.

[175] Williams, *Crimean Tatars*, 17.

[176] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 224.

[177] Ibid., 225.

secularized population.[178] The 1937 census recorded 47.7 percent of the Crimean population as Russian, 20.7 percent Tatar, and 12.8 percent Ukrainian,[179] but World War II and its aftermath at the hands of Joseph Stalin would change this population distribution.

Nazi and Romanian forces invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, and Crimea was to play a vital part in their strategy. Sevastopol was a strategic port city. Taking it would not only deprive the Soviets of their naval presence in the Black Sea and their access to the Mediterranean, but would also provide logistic support for the Nazi invasion of Russia. The siege of the city and the campaign on the Crimea were costly operations. As many as 20,000 Tatars fought in the Soviet forces defending the peninsula, and seventeen percent of the partisans that resisted Nazi rule after the invasion were Tatars. Nevertheless, as did other subject nationalities in the Soviet realm, many Tatar leaders welcomed the Nazis and other Axis powers as liberators from an oppressive Soviet rule.[180] Nazi occupation also resulted in the brutal persecution of some of the peninsula's other ethnic minorities, including the Turkic-speaking Krymchak Jews. Despite the far from universal Tatar support for the Nazi and Romanian occupiers, Joseph Stalin revoked the status of the Tatars as a recognized minority in the Soviet Union and ordered the cleansing of the Crimean ASSR of "anti-Soviet elements."[181]

In May 1944, mechanized divisions of the NKVD[182] loaded between 150,000 and 190,000 Crimean Tatars onto trains and relocated them to special settlements in the Central Asian steppes, primarily Eastern Uzbekistan.[183] The Crimean ASSR was abolished in 1946 and annexed by the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), and Moscow began encouraging Russians to once more repopulate the vacated

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[178] Williams, *Crimean Tatars*, 57.

[179] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 225.

[180] Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*, 669–70.

[181] Marples and Duke, "Ukraine, Russia," 266.

[182] The Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (NKVD) was the most prominent Soviet law enforcement agency, an instrument of internal repression, and the precursor to the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, or KGB.

[183] Williams, *Crimean Tatars*, 87.

lands and properties.[184] In effect, the Soviets ensured that there was no significant ethnic entity on the peninsula other than Russians and Ukrainian "Little Russians." In 1954, however, a relatively peculiar and seemingly inconsequential act by Soviet leaders would have major ramifications.

The Crimean Oblast that had been a part of the RSFSR since 1946 was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) in 1954. Although there is little documentation about the impetus for the transfer, it was justified as a gift to Ukraine in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereyaslav, when Hetman Khmelnytsky declared allegiance to the Russian Empire. It is clear that the transfer was initiated at the highest levels of leadership, because it took the form of an agreement between the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Chairman of the Presidium of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet. When the city councils of Simferopol and Sevastopol were consulted, there was no dissenting voice. The transfer was regarded as an internal administrative affair, a transfer within a state without significant political or economic impact. Furthermore, the documentation cited "common economic [interests] and territorial proximity" and "close economic and cultural links between the Crimean Oblast and Ukraine."[185] Despite these motivations, there had been no Ukrainian autonomism or self-determination initiative in 1954, and regardless of the territory officially being a part of Ukraine, relatively few Ukrainians settled there. The majority of Soviet settlers were ethnic Russians from either Russia or Ukraine.[186] The stunning beauty and warm beaches of the Crimean Peninsula resulted in its transition in the 1950s to an "All-Union Resort" and popular vacation destination for Soviet citizens. The substantial military presence in Sevastopol also contributed to Crimea becoming a retirement locale for high-ranking, mostly Russian, Soviet officers.[187] The heavy Russification of Crimea—that started in 1783 and accelerated after 1944—defined the

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[184] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 225.

[185] Marples and Duke, "Ukraine, Russia," 272.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Williams, *Crimean Tatars*, 116.

demographic composition that would be influential during the transition to democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union.

3. Transition to Independence

The 1980s and 1990s were a tumultuous and multifaceted time for Crimea as Gorbachev's reforms allowed the return of the deported minorities amid multiple referenda for independence as the Soviet Union fractured into its composite pieces. In 1989, Russians made up more than two-thirds of the population in Crimea, Ukrainians just over one-quarter, and Crimean Tatars only one and one-half percent.[188] Furthermore, almost half of the Ukrainians spoke primarily Russian, meaning that 83 percent of the populace used Russian as their first language.[189] This ethnic makeup proved confusing and difficult for domestic and international policy-makers to agree upon as post-Soviet borders and politics took form. Crimeans seemed split and confused regarding their own destiny as well. In response to the question, "Are you for the restoration of the Crimean ASSR as a subject of the USSR and a party to the Union Treaty?" over 93 percent voted in favor and the Crimean Autonomous Republic was restored within the boundaries of the Ukrainian SSR in February 1991.[190] Ten months later, however, 54.1 percent voted in favor of Ukrainian independence.[191] Although this is as shocking as the Donbas's August 1991 vote for independence, it should be noted that Crimea was the only province in the Ukrainian SSR that did not achieve an absolute majority of the populace (considering that there was only a 60 percent voter turnout).[192] As Ukraine became an independent state, however, there was strife on the peninsula, notably when Ukrainian was deemed the official language. Crimea declared itself independent in 1992 and Sevastopol declared itself a Russian Federal City and the stronghold of the Black Sea fleet thanks to the overwhelming Russian loyalty of the officer corps.[193] As a response, Kiev gave Crimea

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[188] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 226.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Marples and Duke, "Ukraine, Russia," 273.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 221.

[193] Ibid., 227; Sasse, "Crimean Issue," 92–93.

significant autonomy with regard to language, and Russian President Boris Yeltsin condemned the declaration by Sevastopol and other Russian separatist claims in order not to separate the city from the peninsula.[194] Despite Yeltsin's stance, Russian politicians were divided on the issue at the time. Even liberal Russians like Anatoliy Sobchak, then the Mayor of St. Petersburg, urged the repeal of the 1954 transfer. Aleksandr Rutskoi, then the Russian Vice-President, spearheaded the movement to "restore" Crimea to Russia.[195] Russian delegate Nikolai Pavlov declared in a January 1992 speech in Sevastopol that "Crimea was never Ukrainian and never will be; it was, and remains, Russian."[196]

The return of deported peoples further complicated the issue. Starting with Gorbachev's social reforms in the 1980s, the minorities that had been deported or had emigrated over the last century started to return. The "deported peoples" included Armenians, Bulgarians, Germans, Greeks, Krymchaks, and Karaims, with the largest group being Crimean Tatars.[197] Returning peoples formed squatter camps and had frequent clashes with local authorities as a result of anti-Tatar prejudices in daily life as well as in the political realm.[198] Such clashes continued through the 1990s and persist to the present. Thousands of Tatars protested the celebration of Catherine's 1783 annexation of Crimea in 1999. Two people were killed in protests following the seizure of the Crimean Parliament building in February 2014 when pro-Russian crowds clashed with pro-Ukrainian Tatars.[199] By the mid-1990s, the Crimean Tatar population in Crimea had increased three-fold to more than 250,000 inhabitants.[200]

The severe downturn of the Ukrainian economy disenchanted many on the Crimean Peninsula with the Ukrainian government. It also brought into stark realization

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[194] Sasse, "Crimean Issue," 92.

[195] Marples and Duke, "Ukraine, Russia," 277.

[196] Pavlov quoted in Marples and Duke, "Ukraine, Russia," 277.

[197] Sasse, "Crimean Issue," 85.

[198] Williams, *Crimean Tatars*, 156.

[199] Ibid., 157.

[200] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 229.

the fact that Crimea's dependence on the Ukrainian infrastructure had developed dramatically in the decades since the 1954 transfer.[201] Crimea received 80 percent of its water, 75 percent of its industrial goods, and 85 percent of its energy from Ukraine.[202] Furthermore, the socioeconomic divide between the population caused little strife between the Russian and Ukrainian inhabitants, but Crimean Tatars constituted 70 percent of the unemployed populace and their financial hardships caused further marginalization.[203]

Minority populations in Crimea viewed the Ukrainian Government as the "guarantor of their cultural and political rights" and opposed Crimean separatism or reintegration into Russia.[204] In 1994, however, Ukraine accepted the removal of Soviet-made nuclear weapons from its soil in order to guarantee its territorial borders.[205] The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 invoked the principles of the 1975 Helsinki Accords regarding the "territorial integrity of states,"[206] and the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States agreed to "respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine" and "reaffirm[ed] their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and [to ensure] that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence."[207] Although perceived by Russian nationalists as an integral part of Russian identity of great strategic value, Crimea was always treated as a matter of Russian-Ukrainian relations that was lightly treaded upon in order not to strain links between the two states.[208] The Russians viewed Crimea as a "useful stick with which to

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[201] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 231.

[202] Sasse, "Crimean Issue," 87–88.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid., 85.

[205] Ibid., 95.

[206] Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe Final Act* (Helsinki: OSCE, 1975), http://www.osce.org/mc/39501?download=true.

[207] Council on Foreign Relations, "Budapest Memorandums."

[208] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath." 227.

beat the Ukrainian Republic,"[209] and it was in the new millennium that Russia would wield it.

C. BACKGROUND AND SYNOPSIS OF THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA

Crimea's role as a strategic issue in Ukrainian-Russian foreign relations in contemporary history stepped from the political discourse and rhetoric of the 20th and early 21st centuries into the realm of military intervention when further Russian troops started appearing in Crimea in 2014. The invasion and subsequent annexation were a direct corollary of events in Kiev and the culmination of more than a decade of tense political relations between Russia and Ukraine amid a revolution as Ukraine swung back and forth between Russia and the West. The events of the Orange Revolution in 2004, the possibility of NATO membership evoked by the NATO Allies at the Bucharest Summit in 2008, potential trade agreements with the European Union rejected by President Yanukovych in November 2013, and his subsequent ouster in February 2014 directly led to overt Russian military involvement on Ukrainian soil in violation of the respect for territorial integrity promised in 1994.

1. Fraud and Revolution

The dramatic shift of Ukrainian politics in 2004 as a result of the Orange Revolution marked a sea change in Russian-Ukrainian relations that would start a struggle between pro-European Union and pro-Russian forces over the next decade. On November 21, 2004, nonpartisan exit polls showed the pro-European reformist Viktor Yushchenko ahead of the Eastern-Ukrainian-native and pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych 52 percent to 43 percent, respectively. When the official results were released the next morning, Yanukovych had miraculously won by a margin of 2.5 percent.[210] The preceding campaign was already marred with controversy as Yushchenko was poisoned with dioxin a few months earlier, and had been denied landing clearances at airports before rallies. Moreover, crowds of thousands of voters wielding multiple absentee

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[209] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 227.

[210] Plokhy, *Gates of Europe,* 334; Adrian Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 2 (March-April 2005): 1.

ballots were observed going from polling station to polling station.[211] A growing middle class in Ukrainian cities and drastic developments in civil society helped by U.S. and European governments, NGOs, and private philanthropists in the early 2000s resulted in a strong liberal opposition that quickly mobilized.[212] Yushchenko declared widespread fraud, convened a snap meeting in parliament, and had himself sworn in as president. This created a confused situation, with an outgoing incumbent president (Leonid Kuchma), a nominal winner in the contested elections (Viktor Yanukovych), and the supposedly popular choice (Viktor Yushchenko).[213] Days of protest followed, the protesters swaddled in orange clothing and waving orange banners—the color of Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party—that gave the movement the moniker of the Orange Revolution. On November 27, 2004, the cabinet, standing president Leonid Kuchma, and the parliament declared the runoff invalid and six days later, the Supreme Court annulled the elections. The next month, under heavy international monitoring, new elections were held and Yushchenko won 52 percent of the vote, with a marked regional division.[214] Despite heavy support from Russian President Putin via lengthy press conferences and several hundred million dollars to Yanukovych, Yushchenko was elected president and voiced a strong dedication to a democratic Ukraine and closer ties to the European Union.[215]

The ensuing years featured strife between Russia and Ukraine. Several disputes over the price of energy supplied by Russian-owned Gazprom and outstanding Ukrainian debts started shortly after the 2004 elections.[216] Relations were further strained in 2008 at the NATO Bucharest Summit, because Georgia and Ukraine sought NATO membership and the NATO Allies declared that "these countries will become members of NATO."[217]

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[211] Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," 2.

[212] Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," 9.

[213] Ibid., 11.

[214] Ibid., 12.

[215] Ibid., 16–17.

[216] Yuliya Tymoshenko, "Containing Russia," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 3 (May-June 2007): 29–31.

[217] "Bucharest Summit Declaration," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, press release, April 3, 2008, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm.

In a press conference with President Yushchenko during a visit to the Kremlin prior to the summit, President Putin threatened to "target its missile systems at Ukraine" if Ukraine joined the NATO alliance and agreed to the positioning of a missile defense system on Ukrainian soil.[218] At the summit, although the NATO Allies welcomed the "Euro-Atlantic aspirations" of Georgia and Ukraine, no Membership Action Plan was offered. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko stated that day that "Georgia's and Ukraine's membership in the alliance is a huge strategic mistake that would have the most serious consequences for pan-European security."[219] Within months, Russian troops were fighting in Georgia, ostensibly to protect Russian citizens in the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[220] Russian fears of further pro-European Union ambitions in Ukraine would be diminished in 2010, though, with the election of Viktor Yanukovych to the presidency.

Viktor Yushchenko's presidency proved less than successful. His administration was troubled by public political clashes with his Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, and a reeling economy owing to the global financial crisis that began in 2008. Yushchenko's old opponent, Viktor Yanukovych, this time ran on a pro-democratic platform, claiming that although the Orange Revolution had been "to weaken Russia," it was a popular call for democracy and that he had learned from the mistakes of 2004.[221] This was absolutely correct: employing what Western analysts described as "anti-democratic" means, Yanukovych was able to change the parliament's laws regarding political coalitions and won the presidential elections without outright fraud.[222] Although he was able to block Ukraine's movement toward NATO membership in 2010, Yanukovych's indecision about whether to sign a EU Association Agreement would be his undoing.

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[218] Peter Finn, "Putin Threatens Ukraine on NATO," *Washington Post*, February 13, 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/12/AR2008021201658.html.

[219] Grushko quoted in "NATO Denies Georgia and Ukraine," April 3, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7328276.stm.

[220] John Biersack and Shannon O'Lear, "The Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation of Crimea: Narratives, Identity, Silences, and Energy," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55, no. 3 (2014): 250, doi: 10.1080/15387216.2014.985241.

[221] Alexander J. Motyl, "Ukrainian Blues: Yanukovych's Rise, Democracy's Fall," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 4 (July-August 2010): 35–36, doi: 10.2307/25680985.

[222] Ibid., 37–38.

The agreement, which promised to promote "democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, a market economy and sustainable development" by "focus[ing] on core economic and political reforms,"[223] met with heavy resistance from Russia. Putin had promised Yanukovych a $15 billion loan if Ukraine joined a nascent Eurasian Customs Union in lieu of the EU agreement.[224] If Yanukovych had accepted the offer, he would have had to rebrand himself as an "anti-Western autocrat with a political future bound to Russia."[225] He would not have the opportunity to rebrand himself, however. Upon rejecting the EU agreement, small protests started on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kiev. The protests quickly gained momentum and eventually government forces were sent to quell the uprising, resulting in 100 deaths between the two sides.[226] As government forces drew down resistance for fear of provoking a wider rebellion, President Yanukovych fled the country on February 21, 2014, and appeared days later in Russia.[227] Prior to fleeing, however, Yanukovych officially invited Russian military forces to help stabilize Ukraine, even though the Ukrainian Constitution only permits the parliament to make such invitations.[228] The Ukrainian Parliament impeached Yanukovych and installed an interim government until elections could be held.[229]

2.   "Little Green Men" and a Referendum

President Putin denounced the impeachment as an "unconstitutional coup" and refused to acknowledge any prior agreements with Ukraine, including the 1994 Budapest Memorandum.[230] One week later, soldiers in plain green uniforms and balaclavas

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[223] Alexander J. Motyl, "Yanukovych's Choice: An Association Agreement with the EU Will Transform Ukraine—and Its President," *Foreign Affairs Special Collection: Crisis in Ukraine* (November 2013): 47.

[224] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 248.

[225] Motyl, "Yanukovych's Choice," 47.

[226] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 248

[227] Ivo Daalder et al., *Preserving Ukraine's Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression: What the United States and NATO Must Do* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2015), 2.

[228] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1264.

[229] Ibid., 1261.

[230] Ibid., 1259.

appeared throughout Crimea and surrounded Ukrainian military installations. Despite the soldiers' accents, weaponry, training, and blatant acts in the interest of military intelligence units of the Russian Federation, Putin refused to acknowledge that these troops without insignia were Russian or had received any training or weapons from the Russian Federation. Although widely recognized throughout the world as Russian forces, they were called "local self-defense units" by President Putin.[231] Following the appearance of what the Crimeans called "Little Green Men," local gunmen seized the Crimean Parliament and held several closed sessions, barring and dismissing many representatives. The Ukrainian military was ordered not to fire on or provoke the Russian forces in order to avoid further Russian involvement.[232] After appointing Sergei Aksenov—a pro-Russian politician—as the head of the Crimean government, Crimea declared independence from Ukraine and requested incorporation into the Russian Federation on March 11.[233]

Within the week, irredentist efforts staged a referendum for the secession of Crimea on March 16. The referendum did not offer a choice to maintain the status quo, presenting only two options: "reunification with Russia," and "increased autonomy under the 1992 Crimean constitution." Furthermore, the presence of armed soldiers in the streets, the boycott of the referendum by several minorities (notably the Crimean Tatars), and the intimidation of Ukrainian and Crimean minorities resulted in the condemnation of the referendum by 100 of the 193 members of the United Nations in a General Assembly vote on March 27, 2014. Conflicting results added to the illegitimacy of the referendum, with official results claiming an 83.1 percent voter turnout and 96.77 percent voting in favor of "reunification," even though the Russian President's Council on Civil Society and Human Rights published a 30 percent turnout with roughly 50 percent in favor of "reunification."[234] As noted earlier, a majority in the United Nations General Assembly condemned the referendum and military intervention in Crimea, but Russia's status as a

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[231] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 249.

[232] Ibid., 250.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid., 251.

permanent member of the UN Security Council meant that the UNSC was powerless.[235] On March 18, 2014, representatives from Crimea and Sevastopol signed a treaty for the accession of Sevastopol and the Republic of Crimea into the Russian Federation with President Putin and other Russian representatives. Putin's speech repeated many of the Russian claims and narratives regarding the crisis. Two days later, the Russian Constitutional Court ratified the treaty.[236]

In the wake of the Russian annexation of Crimea, reports of human rights violations were abundant. After declaring that all Ukrainian citizens legally residing in Crimea and Sevastopol were Russian citizens, Moscow announced that all residents who did not hold a Russian passport were considered aliens.[237] During the course of the occupation, the Russian Federation and the ruling Crimean government silenced all Ukrainian-language television broadcasts and stopped all instruction in the Ukrainian language in the 600 schools that offered it.[238] Those who oppose the annexation have been harassed and threatened, along with journalists. Furthermore, Tatar public leaders have been exiled from the peninsula for refusing to acknowledge Russian authority. In anticipation of the commemoration of the 1944 deportations of the Crimean Tatars, the authorities also pre-emptively banned any public gatherings.[239] The daily harassment of dissenters and the high rate of emigration[240] are likely to ensure further Russification and waning dissent on the peninsula.

"Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Kurgan and Sapun Ridge. Each one of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolizing Russian military glory and outstanding valour," Putin remarked in his March 18, 2014 speech at the Kremlin.[241] The speech rang

[235] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1260.

[236] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1260.

[237] Andrii Klymenko, *Human Rights Abuses in Russian-Occupied Crimea* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council and Freedom House, 2015), 6.

[238] Ibid., 9–11.

[239] Ibid., 12.

[240] Andrii Klymenko, *Militarization of Crimea Under Russian Occupation* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2015), 2, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/The_Militarization_of_Crimea_ under_Russian_Occupation.pdf.

[241] Putin, "Address by President."

with the rhetoric that preceded the invasion and persisted following it. Utilizing Tsarist terms like *Novorossiia* to refer to Ukrainian lands, Putin emphasized the Russian character of the peninsula and the historic landmarks sacred to Russia. Going back in history to reference the baptism of Prince Volodymyr—the Grand Prince of Kiev and ruler of the Kieven Rus—as the cultural link that unites Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, Putin lauded Russian military glory and lamented the downfall of the Soviet Union. Putin condemned the personal initiative of the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev when he "handed over [Crimea] like a sack of potatoes."[242] Considering the human rights violations that followed the annexation of Crimea, it was ironic that Putin acknowledged that Tatars had been "treated unfairly" like many other ethnic groups in the USSR and pledged to support the reestablishment of the Tatar diaspora.[243] Despite Putin's claims that Moscow's motive was to protect the Russian minorities in Crimea and Putin's reference to the invitation to use force by Yanukovych and the Crimean Parliament, grander geopolitical narratives regarding the invasion surfaced. Putin voiced concerns over an expanding NATO creating "not an illusory but a perfectly real threat to the whole of southern Russia"[244] and invoked a terrifying narrative familiar to Russians: invasion from the West. The Russians employed terms like "Nazi," "neo-Nazi," "fascist," and "junta" to describe the revolutionary forces of the Euromaidan and its supporting agencies. Putin's March 18, 2014, speech and the state-controlled Russian media reinforced the propaganda theme of the threat of a fascist invasion from the West that is common in the vernacular of some post-Soviet societies.[245] Putin's speech and the subsequent Kremlin doctrine and rhetoric concerning Russian intervention in Crimea essentially disregard the existence of a valid Ukrainian national concept and relapse into Tsarist and imperialist language, claiming Russian historic rights to the territory. Nevertheless, the strategic relevance of the peninsula regarding a perceived threat from

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[242] Putin, "Address by President," 3.

[243] Ibid., 2.

[244] Ibid., 10.

[245] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 254.

NATO enlargement reveals Russia's geopolitical gains from denying Ukraine potential entry into the Alliance.

D.   CONCLUSION

The invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014 clearly resulted from President Putin's Russia pursuing a revanchist and irredentist agenda. Crimea and the Federal City of Sevastopol are framed as henceforth and eternally Russian territories to be reunified with the motherland after the separation following the collapse of the Soviet Union. While Russia considers other former Soviet republics with Russian-speaking minorities—such as the Baltic States and Georgia—as within its sphere of interest, Ukraine is deemed vital to Russia's own national identity. The 1954 transfer of Crimea to Ukraine was not detrimental to the USSR's strategic interests in an era when Ukraine's loyalty to Moscow was undisputed. The patent rift in social and national identity within Ukraine, a legacy of its rule by different imperial powers, produced a Ukrainian national movement that threatened to drag its future path away from Russia. In annexing Crimea, Russia has managed to bar Ukraine's accession to NATO, which Moscow considers to be an existential threat, while at the same time regaining full control over its strategic naval bases in the Black Sea. The Russian majority and simmering separatist movements made the *coup de main* relatively smooth and bloodless. Although the referendum's validity and the legality of the annexation are contested by 100 of the member states of the United Nations, with a degree of isolation for the Russian Federation, the annexation is a *fait accompli*.[246]

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[246] The economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union remain in force and NATO-Russia Council activities remain suspended at this writing.

IV. CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE HITLER ANALOGY

A. WEIMAR RUSSIA?

Parallels between Russia and Germany did not start being drawn only after the Russo-Ukrainian energy disputes in 2005–2009, the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, or the War in Donbass since 2014. Shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union and advent of the democratic Russian Federation, scholars and journalists identified likenesses between the young Russian democracy and the ill-fated Weimar Republic of Germany whose collapse resulted in Adolf Hitler's fascist dictatorship. Experts began preparing scholarly analyses of these young democracies prior to the rise of Vladimir Putin. Far from establishing any consensus on the similarities or their implications, the comparisons were frequently "left at the level of an interesting remark."[247] The recently humiliated and politically unstable state with a limited democratic culture could easily slip into authoritarianism. Analyses ranged from concerns that Russia would quickly adopt another tyranny after casting one off, to reflection on the difficulty young democracies face without established norms, to discussions of neo-imperialist Russian politicians.[248] Despite the speculative nature of some analyses, the comparison was illustrative and informative as to certain striking similarities. Experts can point out the implications of weak democratic norms and institutions in formerly powerful states with strong national histories and inform policymakers without jumping to sweeping and ill-informed analogies.

The conspicuous similarities between the newly democratized countries were numerous and identifiable. The myth of an internal enemy that weakened the prospects of the nation from the inside persisted in both cases: Jews and capitalists in Weimar Germany, a clique of reformers funded by foreigners in Russia.[249] A newly estranged

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[247] Hanson and Kopstein, "Weimar/Russia Comparison," 252.

[248] Ibid., 252–54.

[249] Luks, "Weimar Russia?" 47–49; Hanson and Kopstein, "Weimar/Russia Comparison," 258–65; Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 736–38; Hanson, *Post-Imperial Democracies*, 148, 192.

diaspora of ethnic nationals across borders evoked an inevitable revisionist and revanchist contingent within both former empires: Alsace-Lorraine, the Sudetenland, Austria, and Poland for Weimar Germany, and the Baltic states, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, the Caucasus, and Central Asia for the Russian Federation.[250] While the Weimar Republic battled the rising Communists and Social Democrats on the left and German Nationalists and National Socialists on the right, Russia dealt with resurgent ex-Communists and nationalist parties.[251] The weight of these similarities, however disturbing and apt, diminishes when examined in a richer historical context.

The late 1990s analysis of the analogy by Hanson and Kopstein appears optimistic in retrospect. They cited continued East/West partnership and the lack of a financial crisis as promising indicators.[252] Setbacks in NATO-Russia relations owing to events such as the Kosovo conflict in 1998–1999 exacerbated and empowered Russian revisionism. Paradoxically, public support has galvanized behind Putin despite economic hardship. What Ivan Krastev called the "paradox of New Authoritarianism" resulted in a consolidation of power without extreme autocratic methods: open borders allow political dissidents to emigrate and the lack of a strict and coherent ideology denies the opposition an easy target for criticism.[253] As Hanson points out, though, Putin's lack of an overarching ideology has resulted in an "odd, hollow quality" to his presidential authoritarianism.[254] To compare the myth of an internal enemy in Weimar Germany and post-Soviet Russia is disproportionate and lopsided. Hitler's pursuit of what he perceived to be internal enemies was central to his genocidal policies. Putin's intimidation and elimination of political opposition and restriction of human rights pales in scope when compared to Hitler's behavior. The path away from liberal democracy in Russia has thus far resulted in an authoritarian regime focused on the consolidation of power

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[250] Luks, "Weimar Russia?," 53; Hanson and Kopstein, "Weimar/Russia Comparison," 266; Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 921; Hanson, *Post-Imperial Democracies*.

[251] Hanson and Kopstein, "Weimar/Russia Comparison," 267; Luks, "Weimar Russia?" 59.

[252] Hanson and Kopstein, "Weimar/Russia Comparison," 278; Luks, "Weimar Russia?" 62–63.

[253] Ivan Krastev, "Paradoxes of the New Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 2 (April 2011): 12–15.

[254] Hanson, *Post-Imperial Democracies*, 235.

domestically and the pursuit of strategic interests in Russia's near-abroad: moves in a zero-sum game to regain the global influence of yesteryear.[255] Relatively modest international resistance and heavy indifference toward the former superpower's status as a permanent member on the U.N. Security Council have resulted in Russian revisionism and resistance in the guise of revanchism for the sake of public support at home.[256] Richard Sakwa has observed that any comparison should be "tempered by the fact that the world of the 1990s and 2000s is a very different one from that of the 1920s or 1930s."[257] Human rights legislation, more robust international institutions, and economic interdependence "raise the threshold of toleration that extremist reaction would have to negotiate."[258]

The deterministic nature of the Weimar Russia comparison in the 1990s was to some degree erroneous, although forecasts of Russia's descent into a presidential authoritarianism were vindicated by events. Nevertheless, the comparisons fall flat when the implications are drawn out beyond the potential of young post-imperial democracies to relapse in to authoritarianism. Although the "Weimar Russia" analogy declined in popularity at the turn of the millennium, events in the 2000s would invoke another similar comparison.

B.   REDUCTIO AD HITLERUM

Following the appearance of Russian forces in Crimea and the ensuing annexation, several public figures made explicit comparisons to Hitler's effort to unite the Reich with the German-speaking peoples of Austria and the Sudetenland. Prince Charles remarked to a World War II Polish refugee that Hitler's invasion of bordering countries was "not unlike…what Putin is doing."[259] Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton commented on Putin's actions in Crimea as follows: "Now if this sounds

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[255] Vladimir Gel'man, *Authoritarian Russia: Analyzing Post-Soviet Regime Changes* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 11–13.

[256] Ibid., xiii.

[257] Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 736.

[258] Ibid.

[259] Kendall, "Vladimir Putin Condemns Prince Charles's 'Nazi' Remarks."

familiar, it's what Hitler did back in the '30s."[260] German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble referred to Putin's methods for the annexation of Crimea as "already adopted by Hitler in the Sudetenland."[261] UK Prime Minister David Cameron, former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and U.S. Senators John McCain and Marco Rubio all made remarks likening President Putin's actions in Crimea to Hitler's in Austria and/or Czechoslovakia.[262]

Not surprisingly, comparing people or their actions to Hitler or his actions is not unique to Putin's annexation of Crimea. This section reviews the phenomenon of Hitler comparisons since World War II and considers their potential effect on the general populace. Following the defeat of Nazi Germany, Hitler and Nazism became the epitome and embodiment of evil to the vast majority of Americans, Europeans, and populations that fought the Axis Powers in World War II. The dissemination of photos of the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis had a distinct effect on the American psyche and became a metaphor for evil itself. Through overuse, comparisons to Hitler became vague analogies for any evil acts and were abundant in discussions on ethics.[263]

In 1953, German-American political philosopher Leo Strauss wrote that "we must avoid the fallacy that in the last decades has frequently been used as a substitute for the *reductio ad absurdum*: the *reductio ad Hitlerum.* A view is not refuted by the fact that it happens to have been shared by Hitler."[264] Also referred to as "playing the Nazi card,"

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[260] Rucker, "Clinton Says Putin's Actions."

[261] "Germany Rebuked over Minister's Nazi-Crimea Comparison," Federal Information and News Dispatch, March 31, 2014.

[262] Ian Traynor and Ewen MacAskill, "David Cameron Warns of 'Appeasing Putin as We did Hitler." *Guardian*, September 2, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/sep/02/david-cameron-warns-appeasing-putin-ukraine-hitler; Simona Kralova, "Crimea Seen as 'Hitler-style' Land Grab," *BBC*, March 7, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26488652; Leslie MacKinnon, "Stephen Harper, John Baird Compare Russia to WW II Era Germany," *CBC News*, March 4, 2014, http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/stephen-harper-john-baird-compare-russia-to-ww-ii-era-germany-1.2559643; Ed O'Keefe, "McCain Rubio Agree with Clinton's Putin-Hitler Comparisons," *Washington Post*, March 5, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/03/05/mccain-rubio-agree-with-clintons-putin-hitler-comparisons/.

[263] Brian Scott Johnson, "'Just Like Hitler': Comparisons to Nazism in American Culture" (PhD diss, University of Massachusetts, 2010), vi.

[264] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953), 42–43.

the fallacy expanded to include any "any fallacious argument that invokes Hitler, Nazism, or mechanisms of the Nazi regime to aid in creating or supporting a point."[265] Utilized by politicians, journalists, and others, the Nazi reference has been used to argue for or against the death penalty, gun control, evolutionism, abortion, and even Zionism, ironically.[266] In 1990, Mike Godwin proposed Godwin's Law of Nazi Analogies: "as an online discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches one."[267] The ultimate paradox of any comparisons is that Hitler and his Nazi followers remain in a category of one. People had committed mass murder with massive territorial ambitions before—including Joseph Stalin, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane—but not with the Nazis' vicious efficiency of industry and concentrated effort to completely eliminate an entire ethnicity. As a result, the Nazi comparison is used frequently and with great effect.

Politicians, journalists, and others invoke Hitler comparisons in a wide spectrum of circumstances. The vandalism against a Jewish community in New York during the Crown Heights Riots in 1991 evoked *Kristallnacht* analogies, which in turn resulted in quick criticisms from the Jewish community—particularly from those who experienced the actual *Kristallnacht* in 1938.[268]

The analogy is frequently condemned when it is evoked. However, several American presidents have used it, and to great effect. Lyndon Johnson compared the expansion of Communism in Southeast Asia to the aggression by Hitler in 1938 when explaining to the American people "why we are in Vietnam" in a 1965 speech.[269] In 1984, Ronald Reagan referred to the appeasement of Hitler at Munich in 1938 to describe

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[265] Gabriel H. Teninbaum, *Reductio ad Hitlerum: Trumping the Judicial Nazi Card* (Research Paper No. 09-37) (Boston: Suffolk Univ. Law School, 2009), 551, http://ssrn.com/abstract=1445423.

[266] Ibid., 553; It has even been applied to the toothbrush-style mustache associated with the dictator and not-remarkably out of fashion since the 1940s, see Rich Cohen, "Becoming Adolf," *Vanity Fair*, November 2007, http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2007/11/cohen200711.

[267] Mike Godwin, "Meme, Counter-Meme," *Wired*, October 1, 1994, http://www.wired.com/1994/10/godwin-if-2/.

[268] Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1994), 158.

[269] Lyndon B. Johnson, "Why We Are in Vietnam," American President Project, July 28, 1965, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27116.

U.S. foreign policy in Central America with regard to Nicaragua.[270] In 1991, George H. W. Bush launched a barrage of direct and indirect comparisons of Hitler and Saddam Hussein in a campaign to vilify the Iraqi leader.[271] Bush compared Hussein's soldiers to the SS and Death's Head Regiments, stated that there was a "direct parallel between what Hitler did to Poland and what Saddam Hussein has done to Kuwait," and, after listing alleged Iraqi atrocities, simply concluded with "Hitler revisited."[272] George W. Bush recycled his father's Hitler-Saddam analogy at a NATO summit in 2002[273] and compared Osama Bin Laden to both Lenin and Hitler in 2006.[274]

The list of examples is not exclusive to American leaders: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez compared Israel's actions in Lebanon with Hitler's genocide[275] and Russian President Vladimir Putin has frequently asserted that there were neo-Nazi, Nazi, and fascist elements in Ukraine's Orange Revolution and Euromaidan.[276] Putin has also compared the United States to the Third Reich:

> Putin went on in May [2007] to make remarks at a ceremony commemorating Soviet victory in the Second World War that were harsher still, reminiscent of the coldest days of the Cold War, when the "imperialist" West was painted in Soviet propaganda as the successor to Nazi Germany. The president's message effectively accused the United States of threatening Russia and the rest of the world: "in our days such threats are not fewer. They are merely transforming, changing their appearance. And these new threats, as in the times of the Third Reich,

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[270] Jordan Bishop, "Metaphors in Politics: Munich 1938, Nicaragua 1979," *Studies in Political Economy* 23, no. 1 (1987): 155, doi: 10.1080/19187033.1987.11675570 155.

[271] Steven A. Hurst, "The Rhetorical Strategy of George H. W. Bush During the Persian Gulf Crisis of 1990–1991: How to Help Lose a War You Won," *Political Studies* 52, no. 2 (May 2004): 381, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.2004.00485.x.

[272] Ibid., 382.

[273] Anne Kornblut and Charles Sennott, "Saddam the New Hitler, Bush Tells Europeans," *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 22, 2002, http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/11/21/1037697805270.html.

[274] "Bush Compares Bin Laden to Hitler," *BBC*, September 5, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5318204.stm.

[275] "Wiesenthal Center Slams Chavez' Hitler Comparison," Simon Wiesenthal Center, press release, August 25, 2006, http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lsKWLbPJLnF&b=4442247&ct=5850871.

[276] Putin, "Address by President," 4–5; Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, "Framing Yourself into a Corner: Russia, Crimea, and the Minimal Action Space," *European Security* 24, no. 1 (2015): 151, doi: 10.1080/09662839.2014.993974.

[carry] the same contempt for human life, the same claims to global exclusivity and diktat."[277]

The intent of these comparisons is transparent: to simplify complex foreign policy situations for mass consumption by demonizing and "discredit[ing]…adversaries" in order to garner support.[278]

Media coverage of these public comparisons results in the transmission and amplification of these sentiments, which have a direct impact on public opinion and support for specific policies. Studies show that without exception American media accepted President George H. W. Bush's Hitler-Hussein comparison and amplified the message to the American public.[279] Furthermore, a majority saw it as legitimate: a poll cited by the *New York Times* reported that 60 percent of Americans agreed with the comparison.[280] A study of English-, German-, and Spanish-language media showed that comparisons of Putin to Hitler started immediately after his election into the presidency in 2000, but spiked following his gas disputes with Ukraine in 2005–2009 and the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, and nearly tripled following the annexation of Crimea.[281]

Ironically, President Putin and the Kremlin have maintained a consistent counter-narrative that neo-Nazis and fascists caused the Euromaidan ouster of Yanukovych and are currently in power in Kiev.[282] Anti-Nazi rhetoric was a staple of Soviet doctrine and has continued to be a part of the post-Soviet vernacular since the fall of the Soviet Union.[283] The state-controlled media in Russia amplify this narrative to an overwhelming reception. 94 percent of Russians got their news on the Crimean conflict through state-

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[277] Vladimir Putin, "Vystupleniyena Voyennom Parade v Chest," 62-y Godovshchiny Podeby v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyne', May 9, 2007, http://www.kremlin.ru, quoted in Eugene B. Rumer, "Russian Foreign Policy beyond Putin," *Adelphi Papers* 390, no. 47 (2007): 9, doi: 10.1080/05679320701707177.

[278] Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War*, 2nd ed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 24.

[279] Hurst, "Rhetorical Strategy," 386.

[280] Ibid., 388.

[281] Kuznetsova, "Underlying Meanings," 2.

[282] Hansen, "Framing Yourself into a Corner," 151.

[283] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 254.

controlled television and an equally high percentage of Russians believed that annexing Crimea was the correct policy move in response to events in Ukraine.[284]

In making these comparisons, policymakers influence the general public by associating a person or action with Hitler or the Nazis, who are almost universally decried as evil. Despite the media's capacity to act as an independent influence on policymakers and the public, the political elites' ability to influence the content of broadcasts and publications has a distinct effect on public opinion.[285] An initially large "information gap" between policymakers and the public,[286] coupled with a potential rally-round-the-flag appeal, produces a compelling galvanizing effect.[287] The Hitler comparison is often an example of political elites utilizing the mass media to influence public opinion in order to legitimize existing or desired foreign policy.[288] Regardless of any inherent inaccuracies in the analogy, the reference evokes a common knowledge and association with evil widely attributed to Hitler.[289] Even negative comparisons—arguing that someone is not like Hitler—offer evidence that the reference is abundant in the media,[290] and studies also show that people are more likely to associate negative correlations than if they had not heard the comparison at all.[291] Policymakers and political elites are therefore capable of evoking a strong emotional response from the public through the invocation of the Hitler metaphor. Regardless of the apparent similarities or differences, public associations with Hitler and the Nazis can quickly polarize public opinion.

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[284] Hansen, "Framing Yourself into a Corner," 142, 152.

[285] Matthew A. Baum and Philip B. K. Potter, "The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (November 2007): 41, doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060406.214132.

[286] Ibid., 42.

[287] Ibid., 44.

[288] Kuznetsova, "Underlying Meanings," 5.

[289] Ibid., 2.

[290] Ibid., 3.

[291] István Kecskes and Laurence R. Horn, eds, *Explorations in Pragmatics: Linguistic, Cognitive and Intercultural Aspects* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 142.

C.   A "CRIMEAN ANSCHLUSS"?

On March 3, 2014, the *Moscow Times* published an opinion article titled "Putin's Crimean Anschluss."[292] The *Financial Times* published a similar article on March 8, 2014 entitled, "We've Been Here Before—in 1938."[293] The mashup image of "Putler"—a stylized likeness of Vladimir Putin with Hitler's infamous parted undercut hairstyle and toothbrush mustache—became ubiquitous at protests of the annexation and throughout Ukraine.[294] Professor Andrey Zubov of the Moscow State Institute of International Affairs was dismissed after writing an article comparing the Russian annexation of Crimea with Germany's *Anschluss* with Austria in 1938.[295] In response, Aleksandr Dugin—the head of a Kremlin-affiliated think-tank—lambasted Professor Zubov. Dugin claimed that if Hitler had stopped collecting German lands in 1939, "completing what Bismarck failed to do…then he would have remained a politician of the highest class."[296] Ignoring the horrific Nazi actions and policies in place prior to Hitler's invasion of Poland—including the Night of the Long Knives, *Kristallnacht*, and the Nuremburg Laws—the defense was alarming.[297] It is imperative to analyze the differences and similarities between the invasions and annexations of Austria in 1938 and Crimea in 2014.

1.   Revanchism, Irredentism, and Pan-Nationalism

The most frequent and pertinent comparison between the German *Anschluss* with Austria and the Russian annexation of Crimea is the claim of protecting the rights of ethnic kin across borders. This is a broadly nonspecific, but nonetheless shared, theme in

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[292] Davidoff, "Putin's Crimean Anschluss."

[293] Brian Potasiewicz, "We've Been Here Before—in 1938," *Financial Times*, March 8, 2014.

[294] Terrence McCoy, "Here's 'Putler:' The Mash-Up Image of Putin and Hitler Sweeping Ukraine," *Washington Post*, April 23, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/23/heres-putler-the-mash-up-image-of-putin-and-hitler-sweeping-ukraine/.

[295] Matthew Bodner, "Professor Says Sacked over Opinion Article against Possible Ukraine Invasion," *Moscow Times*, March 5, 2014, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/professor-says-sacked-over-opinion-article-against-possible-ukraine-invasion/495616.html.

[296] Richard Cohen, "A Putin Affiliate Evokes Hitler. The West Should Be Worried," *Washington Post*, April 21, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/richard-cohen-a-putin-affiliate-evokes-hitler-the-west-should-be-worried/2014/04/21/ddbd3794-c980-11e3-95f7-7ecdde72d2ea_story.html.

[297] Ibid.

both narratives of reunification. However, a closer inspection of the pan-national movements in Austria prior to the *Anschluss* and in Crimea prior to the 2014 annexation shows that they are of a markedly different character.

The dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 and the later fracture of relations between Prussia and Austria in 1866 led to the development of German and Austrian identities that often overlapped.[298] The Pan-German movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had its origins in xenophobic sentiment resulting from a high influx of Czech and Jewish immigrants.[299] With the downfall of the German and Habsburg Empires after World War I, the victors feared a stronger revanchist power. The short-lived *Deutsche-Österreich* Republic sought parity between its German and Austrian parts, but was nevertheless forbidden by the victors in World War I.[300] The isolation of Austria during the Great Depression plunged it deeper into economic crisis. Austrian citizens in the throes of economic hardship saw their German neighbors rising meteorically in prosperity in the mid-to-late 1930s. In this context, a resurgence of xenophobic and nationalist sentiment led to a great outpouring of support for the *Wehrmacht* as it rolled across the borders in 1938.[301] The endorsement from the Catholic Church and leftist politicians resulted in a landslide referendum in favor of "reunification of Austria and the German Reich."[302] The separate development of Germany and Austria as independent regional powers with similar ethno-national roots is strikingly different from Crimea's colonial character.

Conquered by Tsarist Russia in 1783, Crimea developed its patent Russian character as a result of mass-migration of ethnic Russians to replace emigrating Tatars and other indigenous ethnicities.[303] Transferred to Ukraine in 1954 in celebration of the 300th Anniversary of Ukraine's pledged allegiance to the Russian Empire, the peninsula

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[298] Gildea, *Barricades and Borders*, 201–12.

[299] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 6–7.

[300] Steininger, *Austria, Germany*, 2.

[301] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 21.

[302] Steininger, *Austria, Germany*, 10.

[303] Williams, *Crimean Tatars*, 2–6.

became a legal part of the Ukrainian SSR.[304] The dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in Ukrainian independence, and a nascent Crimean independence movement was placated with increased autonomy within Ukraine. Despite being a part of Ukraine's sovereign territory, Crimea maintained its Russian culture and the vast majority of its residents spoke Russian as their first language.[305] Since 1991, Crimea has been prominently pro-Russian, and it had a latent secession movement prior to the annexation in 2014. The prestige associated with Crimea as one of the former crown jewels in Russia's empire and the home to its Black Sea Fleet made it an icon of nostalgia for prior Russian power.[306]

No two cases of ethno-national irredentism are likely to be identical. Pan-Germanism in Austria before the *Anschluss* and Pan-Russianism in Crimea before 2014 were drastically different. Revanchist and irredentist movements are many and varied: Alsace-Lorraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Kosovo, Hong Kong, etc. While historic and current cases may resemble one another in some ways, simply being a revanchist or irredentist movement does not imply similar origins, dynamics, ends, or means.

2.   The *Wehrmacht* and "Little Green Men"

The actual events around the two annexations bear striking similarities, although certain key differences diminish the relevance of any such comparison. Aspects of the annexations resemble each other, but the greater implications of comparisons to Hitler's regime are absent. While both Hitler and Putin reacted militarily to unfavorable political developments in Austria and Crimea, respectively, the purpose and nature of the military involvement were drastically different. Although both initiated referendums for reunification, Austria's did not require electoral fraud while the validity of the Crimean referendum is surrounded by significant controversy and skepticism. Human rights violations followed in the wake of both annexations. However, Austria witnessed the

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[304] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 73–78.

[305] Shaw, "Crimea: Background and Aftermath," 226.

[306] Ibid., 227; Sasse, "Crimean Issue," 92–93.

brutal persecution characteristic of the Nazis while Russian injustices restrict the liberal democratic freedoms of the political opposition.[307]

Hitler's failure to gain power through his political strong-arm tactics with Dollfuss and Schuschnigg pushed him to mobilize Operation Otto to prevent a referendum on Austrian independence.[308] Similarly, the ouster of pro-Kremlin Ukrainian President Yanukovych impelled President Putin to mobilize Russian Special Forces in Crimea to secure Moscow's military interests in the Black Sea.[309] Furthermore, Austria had from the outset been a part of Hitler's design for a greater Germany, and Hitler made this clear on the first page of *Mein Kampf*.[310] While Crimean independence from Ukraine was a point of contention for the ethnic Russians on the peninsula and politicians in the Kremlin,[311] the official line concerning Crimea was not revanchist. As long as Ukraine remained firmly in the Russian orbit, Putin would recognize its territorial integrity and sovereignty. In 2010, the lease on Russia's military bases in Crimea was extended for 25 years from 2017.[312] As soon as a revolution in Kiev threatened those interests, the gears of war started turning. While the Black Sea Fleet lease had been extended, full incorporation of Crimea by Russia removed restrictions on the fleet's expansion.[313] Almost overnight Russia surpassed Turkey as the most powerful Navy in the Black Sea, owing in part to Russia's seizure of Ukrainian ships.[314] Putin commented directly that Russia could not allow a "historical part of the Russian territory with a predominantly ethnic Russian population to be incorporated into an international military alliance"; and that it would mean that "Russia would be practically ousted from the Black Sea area."[315] Although Putin used the ethno-revanchist sentiment as an argument for annexation, the

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[307] Klymenko, *Human Rights Abuses*, 1–20.

[308] Steininger, *Austria, Germany*, 7–8.

[309] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 255.

[310] Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1.

[311] Marples and Duke, "Ukraine, Russia," 275–77.

[312] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1278.

[313] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 255.

[314] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1278.

[315] Putin quoted in Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1274.

move was a strategic one designed to prevent NATO basing in Ukraine and therefore probably not the first pawn captured in reuniting all Russian-speaking peoples under Moscow's rule. While increasing nationalist rhetoric has affected Ukraine-Russia relations since 1991, the nationalist doctrine espoused in official comments concerning Ukraine and Crimea after February 2014 does not explain the policies and actions of the Kremlin.[316]

When Austrians were asked in April 1938 if they agreed with the "reunification of Austria and the German Reich," two thirds of the 6.7-million-person population turned out to cast a vote: 99.73 percent voted "yes."[317] Hitler's courtship of the Catholic Church and the remaining organized labor unions in Austria—particularly Vienna—resulted in the endorsement of Austrian Primate Cardinal Theodor Innitzer and the most prominent Social Democrat, Karl Renner.[318] Despite the pagan ideology of the Nazis and Renner's denouncement of the means of invasion, both Innitzer and Renner encouraged their followers to vote "yes."[319] Furthermore, the Nazis wasted no time in disposing of the political opposition and Austrian Jews: the SS detained 21,000 people in March and April 1938 alone.[320] The existing pan-German attitudes, the endorsement by major public figures, and the elimination and intimidation of the political opposition negated the need for any falsification of ballots.[321]

The Crimean referendum, in contrast, has been shrouded in more controversy. Within two weeks of the appearance of unmarked Russian forces, "local self-defense units" stormed the Crimean Parliament. Barring and dismissing several representatives during closed-door sessions, the Parliament issued a declaration of independence and announced a referendum in five days' time.[322] The plebiscite did not include an option to

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[316] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1282.

[317] Steininger, *Austria, Germany*, 10; "Annual Average Population since 1870," Statistics Austria, n.d., http://www.statistik.at.

[318] Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 35–36.

[319] Ibid., 100.

[320] Steininger, *Austria, Germany*, 12.

[321] Ibid., 10.

[322] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1260.

maintain the status quo, armed soldiers were in the streets, and non-Russian minority leaders called for a boycott of the referendum. The United Nations' International Court of Justice ruled that the declaration of independence was invalid due to the unauthorized use of force and the presence of "paramilitary and self-defense units…was not conducive to an environment in which the will of voters could be exercised freely."[323] Although the presence of armed forces in both situations did not encourage such an environment, the results of the Crimean referendum were suspect. President Putin alleged in his March 18, 2014 speech that there was an 82 percent voter turnout, with 96 percent in favor of reunification.[324] However, the Russian President's Council on Civil Society and Human Rights reported a 30 percent voter turnout with roughly 50 percent voting in favor of reunification; other sources reported even slighter support.[325] If the latter numbers are correct, reunification is the preference of only 15 percent of the Crimean population, instead of the 78 percent claimed by President Putin.

Granted, neither referendum reflected the democratic ideal. The *Wehrmacht* presence, SS arrests, and political intimidation absolutely did not encourage a safe and fair voting environment. Nevertheless, if widespread fraud was not employed in the Austrian referendum, 60 percent of eligible Austrians voted in favor of annexation: a likely result concerning popular sentiment at the time. The conflicting reports of the Crimean referendum cast a skeptical shadow over an already internationally condemned vote. The vote in Crimea was a façade of being "in full compliance with democratic procedures and international norms,"[326] as Putin referred to it, regardless of the United Nations General Assembly denunciation. Despite the aggressive and expansionist nature of the Nazis' invasion, the *Anschluss* was the will of the majority, while Russia's annexation of Crimea was probably not.

Hitler's pursuit of a "racially homogeneous national community" is the first time that any state has attempted to rid itself of all supposedly racially inferior populations on

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[323] Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention," 1266.

[324] Putin, "Address by President," 1.

[325] Biersack and O'Lear, "Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation," 251.

[326] Putin, "Address by President," 1.

such an enormous scale.[327] It remains the most extreme large-scale instance of such atrocities.[328] Policies of exclusion, exploitation, and extermination of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, Slavs, and others were central to the Nazis' ideology and the basis of their pursuit of domination.[329] If Hitler had been successful, the mass-killing would have continued. In pursuit of *Lebensraum*—or living space—for the German people in the East, Hitler intended to destroy Poland and the USSR. According to Snyder, thirty million would have starved the first winter, while tens of millions would have been "expelled, killed, assimilated, or enslaved thereafter."[330] Hitler and the Nazi leadership were intent on ruling their occupied lands with an iron fist, lording over those they perceived as inferior. A multitude of emperors, kings, and rulers have conquered lands, massacring and enslaving their inhabitants. Hitler and the Nazis were the first to do it with industrial efficiency and with the express goal of completely eliminating an entire ethnicity. Such a genocidal agenda is absent from President Putin's geopolitical endeavors, despite the extreme expansionist views articulated by Aleksandr Dugin and other Kremlin advisors.[331]

The mysterious appearance in Crimea of Russian special forces without insignia in February and March 2014 initiated a sequence of events that resulted in a series of human rights violations. A genocidal agenda however, has never been a part of Russia's occupation of Crimea. Since the declaration of independence and annexation of Crimea, Russian rule of the peninsula has resulted in a series of transgressions against the non-Russian minorities. Authorities prohibited public gatherings and exiled Crimean Tatar leaders that refused to acknowledge the annexation.[332] Declaring all residents without Russian passports illegal aliens, harassment of dissenters, banning Ukrainian television

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[327] Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 5.

[328] Ibid.

[329] Ibid., 6.

[330] Snyder, *Bloodlands*, ix–x.

[331] Matthew Schmidt, "Is Putin Pursuing a Policy of Eurasianism?" *Demokratizatsya* 13, no. 1 (winter 2005): 92.

[332] Klymenko, *Human Rights Abuses*, 12.

broadcasts, and terminating all Ukrainian-language programs in schools are blatant restrictions on Crimean residents' human rights and counter to the international norms of a liberal democracy.[333]

Nevertheless, while Hitler's dogma was centered around anti-Semitism and a deep racial hatred, Putin's rhetoric is completely void of any such verbiage. The Russian President even acknowledged the mistreatment of the Crimean Tatar populace during Soviet times, promising to aid in the rehabilitation of displaced Tatars.[334] Putin further stated, "We have great respect for people of all the ethnic groups living in Crimea. This is their common home, their motherland."[335] Although Putin conducted the clandestine invasion and annexation of Crimea behind a veil of protecting ethnic Russians and Russian nationals, ethno-nationalism does not necessarily lead to the genocide of minorities.

Hitler's and Putin's annexations and territorial acquisitions show similarities to other irredentist land grabs in international history. The two admittedly authoritarian leaders are dissimilar in the most significant defining characteristic of Hitler's regime: genocide. Although Hitler and Putin exhibited revanchist actions, ill-informed comparisons polarize public opinion and inhibit dialogue. Nazi atrocities in the 1930s and 1940s remain in a singular category, and comparisons with the Nazis breed resentment and restrict diplomatic relations.

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[333] Klymenko, *Human Rights Abuses*, 6–11.

[334] Putin, "Address by President," 2.

[335] Ibid.

V. CONCLUSIONS

"Let me give you an analogy; analogies, it is true, decide nothing, but they can make one feel more at home."[336] Sigmund Freud insisted that analogies were necessary in psychoanalysis, although one must constantly change the analogy to fit one's purpose. Writing in 1933, Freud fittingly used an analogy of ethnic geography to explain the interactions of the id, the ego, and the superego. The Germans that herded cattle in the hills were not completely isolated, but intermixed with and influenced the Magyars that grew cereals in the plains and the Slovaks that fished the lakes.[337] Inevitably, characteristics of the id, the ego, and the superego will diverge just as those of the Germans, the Magyars, and the Slovaks will diverge. Indeed, by definition all analogies are false and incomplete. Nevertheless, as George Santayana's famous maxim warns, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."[338] The difficulty, however, is in remembering the past correctly.

Ernest May demonstrates that when policymakers have used historical precedents to influence their decision-making the results have often been flawed. In the cases May reviewed, politicians' reading of history was based on perceived connections that were "narrowly selected and subjected to no deliberate scrutiny or analysis."[339] The superficial nature of the analysis led to a lack of consideration of potential alternatives, repercussions, or "discontinuities."[340] If revanchist actors with nationalist dogmas are framed as "the next Hitler" or "just like Hitler," it limits the scope or inclination of policymakers to engage in a thorough and searching appraisal of the situation and can lead to painting with broad, inaccurate strokes. In addition to distorting policymaking, the ill-founded comparison can have detrimental effects on diplomatic relationships.

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[336] Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, edited by James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965), 90.

[337] Ibid., 195.

[338] George Santayana, *Reason in Common Sense*, vol. 1 of *The Life of Reason* (New York: Dover, 1980), 82.

[339] Ernest R. May, *"Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), 51.

[340] Ibid., 17–18.

Since Hitler has become the personification of evil worldwide, notably in societies that fought the Nazi war machine, a comparison to him is tantamount to an accusation of constituting the same evil. The massive casualties sustained by the Soviet Union while fighting the Nazis deepens the negative stigma in Russia and drawing such a parallel does not foster cooperation. Hillary Clinton's comparison elicited a rebuke from President Putin. According to Putin, "When people push boundaries too far, it's not because they are strong but because they are weak. But maybe weakness is not the worst quality for a woman."[341] At the time of this writing, the former First Lady, U.S. Senator from New York, and Secretary of State is a presidential candidate in the 2016 election. Her use of the Hitler comparison could have drastically negative effects on the personal relationship between the presidents of the two largest nuclear powers, should she be elected president. Regardless of the hypothetical nature of this conjecture, it suggests the possible adverse consequences of such superficial analogies.

Moreover, as noted in Chapter IV, Putin on at least one occasion in 2007 compared the United States to the Third Reich. Such insulting comparisons do not foster the cultivation of constructive relations between Washington and Moscow. Nor do Russian characterizations of the Kiev government as "fascist" and "neo-Nazi" promote positive relations and conflict resolution.

The violent pursuit of nationalist agendas resulted in unprecedented devastation and suffering in the two world wars of the twentieth century, and responsible governments should strive to prevent such a recurrence. Nationalism, however, is a recent phenomenon with regard to "the notion of political unity and independence."[342] Just as the nature of nationalism has evolved since its inception, it continues to change with modernity and globalization.[343] If the recent resurgence of nationalism in Europe is analyzed using antiquated analogies and concepts, then policies and strategies to cope

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[341] Vladimir Putin, "Vladimir Putin's interview with Radio Europe 1 and TF1 TV Channel," June 4, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/45832.

[342] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 23.

[343] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2006), xx; Andre Gingrich and Marcus Banks, *Neo-nationalism in Europe and Beyond: Perspectives from Social Anthropology* (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 2.

with its potential outcomes will not be as effective as remedies adapted to the new challenges. It is imperative that the nationalist character of each case be individually assessed when addressing foreign policy. If modern neo-nationalism is analyzed with the model of fascist nationalism utilized by Hitler, then the successful conduct of foreign policy will inevitably be hampered.

Vladimir Putin is not Adolf Hitler. Crimea is not Austria. To frame the Crimean situation in terms recalling Hitler and the Nazi German *Anschluss* with Austria is to compare a current member of NATO's Partnership for Peace and key interlocutor in the NATO-Russia Council to a genocidal dictator at a time when relations are already icy. Unnecessary barriers to dialogue and cooperation can only aggravate antagonism and postpone potential solutions to security issues. Analogies to Hitler and the Nazis galvanize public opinion against a potential adversary by oversimplifying complex situations and vilifying the antagonist. Such analogies are therefore counterproductive. Sigmund Freud was correct: analogies make people feel more comfortable in coming to conclusions but they generally decide nothing of value. If an ill-founded analogy leads to unsound conclusions, the consequences may be catastrophic.

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